Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Defense appropriations bill, we request your strong bipartisan support for the Virginia-class attack submarine and the Columbia-class sea-based deterrence submarine.

Virginia-class Submarine

We are deeply concerned with the proposal to procure just one Virginia-class submarine in the President's proposed FY 2021 budget. In recent years, Congress has heard consistent and alarming testimony about the growing capabilities and increased undersea activity of competitors like Russia and China. For example, just last month Vice Adm. Andrew "Woody" Lewis, commander of U.S. Second Fleet, noted that he is seeing an *"ever-increasing number of Russian submarines"* deploying to the Atlantic. Admiral Phillip Davidson, commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, told Congress last March that *"My day-to-day [submarine] requirement is met by slightly over 50 percent of what I've asked for."*

Despite these challenges, attack submarine capabilities remain one of our most distinct national security advantages. We agree with Defense Secretary Mark Esper when he said that *"[w]e have to maintain that overmatch, and that means we have to continue to grow the fleet and build capabilities into each version."*

Unfortunately, our attack submarine fleet is on track to decline to just 42 boats in 2027 – a nearly 20 percent reduction from current levels. In fact under current plans, the attack submarine force will face the deepest and most prolonged shortfall below requirements of any ship type over the next thirty years. As Admiral John Richardson, then-Chief of Naval Operations, told Congress last year, *"with respect to our greatest gap between the war fighting requirement and current inventory, there's no greater need than the attack submarine fleet...it's a wide gap and it's getting wider. So, every single submarine counts against closing that gap."*

This is why Congress has strongly supported and defended the consistent two-a-year build rate of Virginia-class attack submarines. Congress has already allocated more than $1.1 billion to support a second FY 2021 submarine, including $200 million specifically authorized and

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

appropriated last year on a bipartisan basis to support sustainment of the two-a-year build rate in FY 2021. Further, an estimated 300 contracts have already been awarded to suppliers in the nation-wide industrial base in support of the submarine that was removed from the President's FY 2021 budget.

The proposal to request one attack submarine is contrary to the National Defense Strategy, the needs of our combatant commanders, and a decade of Congressional action in support of a steady two-a-year build rate to support our national security and ensure stability in the industrial base. Of note, the Navy recently ranked the restoration of the second 2021 Virginia-class submarine as its top unfunded requirement. **To that end, we respectfully request your strong support for two Virginia-class submarines in FY 2021.**

Columbia-class Submarine

The replacement for the Ohio-class submarine program, which has faithfully deterred our adversaries for over 40 years, represents a critical leg of our nation's nuclear triad and will carry nearly 70 percent of the nation's deployed nuclear arsenal. This program is the Navy's number one acquisition priority and must maintain its aggressive schedule to continue to meet the nation's strategic deterrence goals. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review reaffirmed the central role that our sea-based deterrent will play in the coming decades.

The President's FY 2021 budget requests funding to begin construction of the first boat of our Navy's Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine program. This milestone represents the beginning of a once-in-a-generation commitment to recapitalizing our sea-based strategic deterrent. Congress has provided strong support for the Columbia-class program in recent years, including innovative new authorities to ensure the efficient use of taxpayer dollars and stability in the industrial base. As a result, at the start of construction the Columbia-class program will have reached over 80 percent design completion, compared to just two percent at the same stage of the Ohio-class program.

Strong Congressional support for the program at this milestone is critical to ensuring that the Navy, the shipbuilders, and the industrial base have the support they need to ensure success in this central part of our nation's strategic deterrence. **To this end, we urge your full support for the President's budget request for the Columbia-class program.**

Sincerely,

JOE COURTNEY Member of Congress	JAMES R. LANGEVIN Member of Congress	ROB WITTMAN Member of Congress

_____

Member of Congress

The Fiscal Year 2021 Support Letter for the Navy's Submarine Programs is sent on behalf of the following Members of the United States House of Representatives:

James R. Baird
Jim Banks
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Brendan F. Boyle
Anthony Brindisi
Anthony G. Brown
Julia Brownley
Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Bradley Byrne
Salud O. Carbajal
Tony Cárdenas
André Carson
Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Steve Chabot
David N. Cicilline
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Ben Cline
Paul Cook
Gerald E. Connolly
Joe Cunningham
Susan A. Davis
Madeleine Dean
Rosa L. DeLauro
Suzan DelBene
Theodore E. Deutch
Mike Doyle
Brian Fitzpatrick
Bill Flores
Bill Foster
Mike Gallagher
Ruben Gallego
John Garamendi
Jared Golden
Jimmy Gomez
Anthony Gonzalez
H. Morgan Griffith
Vicky Hartzler
Alcee L. Hastings
Jahana Hayes
Denny Heck
Jody Hice
Jim Himes
Steven Horsford
Chrissy Houlahan
Bill Johnson
John Joyce, M.D.
John Katko
Trent Kelly
William R. Keating
Andy Kim
Peter T. King
Adam Kinzinger
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ann McLane Kuster
Conor Lamb
John B. Larson
Susie Lee
Alan Lowenthal
Blaine Luetkemeyer
Elaine G. Luria
Stephen F. Lynch
Tom Malinowksi
Lucy McBath
A. Donald McEachin
James P. McGovern
Daniel P. Meuser
Carol D. Miller
Paul Mitchell
Richard E. Neal
Donald Norcross
Tom O'Halleran
Jimmy Panetta
Chris Pappas
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Ed Perlmutter
Scott Peters
Dean Phillips
Chellie Pingree
Bill Posey
Guy Reschenthaler
Denver L. Riggleman III
Lisa Blunt Rochester
David P. Roe, M.D.
Francis Rooney
Harley Rouda
Mary Gay Scanlon
Abigail D. Spanberger
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Mikie Sherrill
Albio Sires
Elise Stefanik
Steve Stivers
Thomas R. Suozzi
Bennie G. Thompson
Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Paul D. Tonko
Lori Trahan
David Trone
Michael R. Turner
Filemon Vela
Ann Wagner
Jackie Walorski
Maxine Waters
Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Susan Wild
Joe Wilson
Ron Wright
Jennifer Wexton
John Yarmuth