

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As conference negotiations begin for the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (FY 2021 NDAA) and defense budget appropriations discussions are ongoing, we urge you to preserve the highest possible funding for both the Virginia and Columbia class submarine programs. The Columbia class program modernizes the most survivable leg of the nuclear triad, while the Virginia class ensures the future of undersea dominance. Both programs advance our nuclear and conventional capabilities against our peer competitors, and require sustained investment in the submarine industrial base and workforce to ensure the Navy has the necessary technology for the conflicts of tomorrow.

We request that you include the following funding levels in the final conference agreement to secure the future of the Navy's submarine fleet:

- \$2.891 billion for Columbia Class Procurement.
- \$1.298 billion for Columbia Class Advance Procurement
- \$4.630 billion for Virginia Class Procurement
- \$2.173 billion for Virginia Advance Class Procurement
- \$74 million for Submarine Workforce Development
- \$282 million for Research and Development for a New Design SSN

We applaud the House Armed Service Committee and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense for fully funding two Virginia class submarines in their FY 2021 bills. The Navy's 30-year shipbuilding plan and the FY 2020 NDAA emphasize the importance of a two-per-year submarine production cadence for FY 2021 through FY 2024 to stabilize the industrial base. The House bills keeps faith with this consensus by authorizing an additional \$2.3 billion in procurement and an additional \$27 million in advance procurement above the President's budget request. This total of \$4.6 billion in procurement and \$2.1 billion in advance procurement will provide robust funding for a second Virginia class submarine in FY 2021 and help offset the retirement tempo. The attack submarine inventory is projected to drop to 42 boats in 2027 – a number dangerously short of the 66 attack submarines the Navy requires. Without this additional funding in FY 2021, it will become harder each year to close this deficit.

In addition to Virginia class submarine procurement, we support the House bill's decision to authorize \$282 million for research and development of a new design SSN. This includes the development of a Virginia class submarine hosted seabed warfare capability. This future design SSN would be authorized and funded by Congress in FY 2024, but hardware procurement and prototyping must be funded in FY 2021 to help reduce schedule and technical risk.

We were pleased that both the House and the Senate bills authorized \$2.8 billion in procurement to fully fund the first Columbia Class submarine. This is a historic milestone in securing the future of sea based strategic deterrence and advancing the Navy's number one procurement priority. It is critical that the final bill include the additional \$175 million in advanced procurement for Columbia Class supplier development – for a total of \$1.2 billion – that is authorized in the Senate bill. This additional funding will bolster the nearly 5,000 suppliers, many of which are single or sole source and span all 50 states, shaping the industrial base for construction of Columbia's inaugural boat. We urge you to include this timely and targeted

funding to protect fragile suppliers and create efficiencies with the concurrent production of Virginia and Columbia submarines.

Finally, we strongly support the bicameral decision to authorize an additional \$20 million in submarine workforce development funding. Given maintenance and production demand uncertainty, this funding will be critical to the health and delivery timelines of both the Columbia and Virginia class programs by injecting stability and training into the high-skill and high-wage manufacturing force. We further recommend inclusion of Section 811 from the Senate-passed NDAA, which would authorize a workforce working group between the Navy and the Department of Labor. This Joint Task Force will identify training opportunities for shipbuilders to educate and build a sustainable, qualified, and motivated workforce capable of delivering submarines at the rate required by our nation.

We have made a longstanding bipartisan commitment to undersea predominance reflected in the National Defense Strategy and Navy's 30-year shipbuilding plan. We ask you to make good on this commitment as you move through conference negotiations and authorize the highest possible funding for the Columbia and Virginia programs in this year's NDAA. Thank you for consideration of this request and look forward to working with you to secure robust submarine funding during this budget cycle.

Sincerely,