

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 22, 2012

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young  
Chairman, Defense Subcommittee  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-405 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks  
Ranking Member, Defense Subcommittee  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Young and Ranking Member Dicks:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2013 budget request for the Department of Defense, we write to urge your strong and continued support for the Virginia Class Submarine program and the industrial base that supports it.

The value of undersea capabilities, and in particular that of our attack submarine force, was validated in the new strategic review released by the Department of Defense earlier this year. Admiral Willard, in his final testimony before the House Armed Services Committee as Commander of US Pacific Command, told the Committee, “We rely on our submarines greatly for a great many things. They are multi-mission-capable assets and we employ them globally and again they serve to secure the Pacific in every way. The Virginia-class submarine is our newest, most formidable, and provides increased capabilities in some cases that we very much need.” Admiral Jon Greenert, our Chief of Naval Operations, added that the Virginia Class submarine is “the best submarine in the world.”

However, at the same time that submarines are taking a lead role in our nation’s security, the submarine force faces significant pressures in the decades ahead. While we have a fleet of 54 attack submarines today, we begin to fall below the stated force level requirements of 48 submarines beginning in the early 2020’s as our older attack submarines, built in the Cold War era, retire at a faster pace than we plan to replace them. Congress recognized the need to invest in our submarine force by providing the resources needed to support the production of two submarines per year – a milestone which was achieved in 2011, but nearly a decade later than initially planned.

Working together, the Navy and the submarine industrial base – representing thousands of jobs in every state in our nation – have achieved unprecedented success in driving down costs and accelerating the construction schedule of our submarines. Most Virginia Class submarines have been delivered on or ahead of contract schedule, and several have been delivered below target cost. This is the best shipbuilding program in the Navy, and a model for Department of Defense acquisition programs. The achievement and continuation of a consistent two-a-year build rate is critical to this unmatched success.

The FY13 budget request includes provisions for multiyear procurement authority for the purchase of submarines from FY14-18. This multiyear procurement is estimated to save taxpayers \$4.5 billion – a savings of 14 percent – over the course of the five year period covered by this request. At a time when all elements of the government are challenged to reduce spending

and ensure the proper use of taxpayer dollars, the demonstrated success of the industrial base in driving down costs and increasing efficiency in the construction of new submarines must be sustained, and additional multiyear authority is critical to these efforts.

However, we are concerned that the proposed FY13 budget also shifts procurement of one submarine originally planned for 2014 to 2018. Defense Department and Navy officials have made clear that this decision was made purely for budgetary purposes – and that they would strongly support exploring ways to sustain the two submarine build rate in 2014 and beyond. At a time when our military leaders will rely on submarines to execute missions of extreme importance to the security of the U.S., we are concerned that this budget-driven decision will exacerbate the shortfall in required submarine force levels. This proposal will also harm the progress made towards cost reduction and efficiency demonstrated in the program to date.

Building a second submarine in 2014 would reduce the submarine operational shortfall and mitigate any disturbances in the industrial base. Delaying the second submarine in the 2014 to 2018 timeframe is also estimated to increase the cost of Block IV by nearly \$600 million. We owe it to the taxpayers to consider this additional cost, which does not buy additional capability, when considering the impact of the 2013 budget request.

**To this end, we respectfully urge the following:**

- 1. Your strong support for continued multi-year procurement authority for the Virginia Class Submarine Program.**
- 2. Consideration of alternative strategies that would sustain submarine construction at two a year in 2014 and through the course of the Block IV multi-year contract.**

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request. We realize the difficult choices you face in crafting this year's budget and look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that our submarine force has the tools it needs to support our nation's security.

Sincerely,



J. RANDY FORBES  
Member of Congress



JAMES R. LANGEVIN  
Member of Congress



ROBERT J. WITTMAN  
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress