

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

March 1, 2024

The Honorable Susanna V. Blume  
Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation  
3010 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-3010

Dear Director Blume,

It is integral that Congress and the Department of Defense maintain an open dialogue regarding American national defense issues, particularly those relating to the future of our maritime superiority. To this end, we appreciate your efforts to engage Congress regarding the analyses of the Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) last year. We write today to underscore our shared understanding of future amphibious shipbuilding cost saving opportunities.

In the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Congress mandated the U.S. Navy to maintain at least 31 L-class amphibious warfare ships. Time and again, Marine Corps and Navy leaders have testified to the importance of maintaining this amphibious ship capacity. In April 2023 then-Commandant of the Marine Corps General David Berger told the House Armed Services Committee that amphibious warfare ships project power as “both a warning to our adversaries and as a visible sign of commitment to allies and partners,” and that the 31-ship floor ensures “warfighting readiness and responsiveness of amphibious naval forces.”

In the unclassified Battle Force Ship Assessment and Requirement (BFSAR) and Chief of Naval Operations Navigation Plan, both released in 2022, the Navy looks to maintain 31 traditional L-class amphibious ships. However, in the 2024 future year defense program (FYDP) the Navy originally procured only one LHA and zero LPDs, and the 30-year shipbuilding plan envisioned a Navy with less than 30 L-class ships through 2029, with capacity dropping even further in 2035.<sup>1</sup> The Navy must now play catch-up, and multiyear procurements must be enacted swiftly and efficiently. Multiyear procurement programs have the support of outgoing Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday<sup>2</sup> and according to former Assistant Secretary of the Navy James F. Geurts, these programs will generate savings between 8% and 12% - that is one billion dollars in savings for the taxpayer.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress; April 19, 2023 - DocumentCloud](#)

<sup>2</sup> [CNO Wants to Pursue Multi-Year Buy for Stalled Amphibious Ship Program - USNI News](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://seapowermagazine.org/geurts-navy-looking-at-money-saving-strategies-in-procurement-of-four-amphibs/>

As the cost assessment arm of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, CAPE should recognize the value of the cost savings generated by multiyear procurement of America class and San Antonio class amphibious ships.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you provide responses to the following requests regarding your office's assessment of the future of Navy amphibious warfare ship procurement:

- Do CAPE assessments agree with the analysis of Navy and Marine Corps leaders that suggests substantial savings will be generated by multiyear procurement of amphibious warfare ships?
- Does CAPE support the use of multiyear procurement authorities to procure amphibious warfare ships to meet the congressionally mandated 31 L-class amphibious ship floor passed into law in 2022?

We appreciated your engagement last summer on these topics, and you affirming your support for both the 31 L-class amphibious force structure and your support for an amphibious ship LHA/LPD multiyear procurement as authorized by section 129 of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023. We are committed to ensuring that our Navy and Marine Corps team have the necessary resources to defend our interests and look forward to working with you and your team to implement this important multiyear procurement acquisition.

Sincerely,



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Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



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Trent Kelly  
Member of Congress