



SUBMARINE INDUSTRIAL BASE COUNCIL

VIRGINIA CLASS ATTACK SUBMARINE PROGRAM

Maintain the Two Virginia Class Submarines Annual Build Rate

The Virginia Class attack submarine remains the most versatile and effective platform within the United States undersea warfare inventory. The U.S. currently has 50 fast attack submarines within the fleet, including 20 Virginia Class submarines. Over the past decade, Navy and Defense Department leaders have consistently articulated a need for additional fast attack submarines. The recent Long Range Navy Shipbuilding Plan, released in June 2021, calls for a Future Fleet Architecture of at least 72 fast attack submarines by 2045, which would include a composition of traditional Virginia platforms in addition to Virginia Payload Module (VPM) and Subsea and Seabed Warfare (SSW) capable hulls. With this demand continuing to grow, it is critical the nation maintains at least a 2 submarine per year build rate for the Virginia Class program.

The Threat Is Increasing

- *"We are very bullish on undersea warfare and submarines. Where we're headed with the industrial base is to essentially go as fast as they'll allow us to go with respect to producing capability off the assembly line."*—Chief of Naval Operations ADM Gilday, 18 November 2021, U.S. Naval War College
- *"We have to go fast, because our adversaries are not going slow... if we don't maintain the advantage we have with Virginia, we will lose our undersea advantage."*—VADM William Houston, Commander of Naval Submarine Forces, 17 November 2021, Naval Submarine League Symposium

The Submarine Industrial Base Must be Protected

- The industrial base is fragile, having lost thousands of submarine suppliers since the Cold War. Today, 2,557 first-tier suppliers across nearly all 50 states provide thousands of high-skill, high-wage manufacturing jobs at shipyards and submarine supplier companies across the country.
- *"Ensuring a robust, resilient, and competitive domestic defense industrial base that has the capability, capacity, and workforce to meet the Virginia Class submarine undersea warfighting mission is essential to our national security."*—President Joe Biden, 21 December 2021. Memorandum on Section 303 of the Defense Production Act of 1950

Virginia Class submarines are purchased in Blocks for efficiency and to help with industrial base stability. The Virginia program delivered its first Block IV submarine (SSN792) in the Spring of 2020—during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic—and after recovering from COVID setbacks, recently delivered the second (SSN793) and is prepared to deliver the third hull of the Block (SSN794) in 2022.

The Block V contract was awarded in December of 2019 and construction of these submarines is continuing in earnest, with Block V submarines including specific Acoustic Superiority and technical insertion upgrades to combat Russian and Chinese threats. Further, the Virginia Payload Module (VPM), which adds 28 additional launch canisters per hull, will be introduced on the second submarine in Block V, and will be included on all follow-on submarines in the Block. Currently, nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) and guided missile submarines (SSGNs) provide Tomahawk cruise missile launch capability. When the last SSGN retires in 2028, the U.S. will lose 60 percent of its undersea strike capacity. VPM mitigates this loss.

REQUEST
FOR ACTION

Support the President's Budget Request for Virginia Class RDT&E and SCN
Maintain the 2 Per Year Annual Build Rate