



## THE SUBMARINE INDUSTRIAL BASE COUNCIL

March 6, 2024

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Submarine Industrial Base Council, we want to thank you for recognizing the vital role submarines play in our national defense. The submarine industrial base represents the 2,698 first-tier suppliers and thousands of additional lower-tier businesses that make up the nation's submarine industrial base. These companies provide good-paying jobs to tens of thousands of highly skilled workers in all 50 states. For FY24, we request you pass the FY24 Defense Appropriations Act. The Navy will only be able to procure one Virginia Class Submarine in FY24 if there is a year-long Continuing Resolution (CR). For FY25, we request your support for three critical submarine program issues.

### **Columbia Class Submarine Program—Support the President's Budget for the Newest and Most Survivable Leg of the Nuclear Triad**

The Columbia Class ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) program is the most advanced deterrent platform ever produced by the United States of America and remains the #1 national security priority for the Department of Defense. This program will deliver a minimum of 12 submarines into the fleet, replacing the current Ohio Class fleet and providing persistent strategic deterrence into the 2080s. In October 2020, construction of the first Columbia hull officially began and is now over 42% complete. The Columbia program has an aggressive construction and delivery schedule. Full funding is critical to keeping the program on schedule and bolstering the fragile supply base. The first Columbia Class SSBN is planned to be delivered to the Navy in 2027 to make her first strategic deterrent patrol in 2030.

FY25 funding will be used for continued construction of the SSBN827 (second ship in the class), material procurement for all follow-on ships in the class, and continuing design maturity on the program. Columbia Class funding in FY25 will also support enterprise efforts to revitalize the nation's submarine workforce and industrial base.

### **Virginia Class Attack Submarine Program—Provide Funding for Two Shipsets of Material to Maintain Stable Supplier Demand**

The Virginia Class attack submarine remains the most agile, versatile, and adaptable platform within the United States undersea warfare inventory, able to prosecute a broad range of mission sets and evolve throughout the life of the program to meet future threats. With near-peer rival competition now the fiercest in decades and the National Security Strategy identifying 2020–2030 as an "inflection point" and a time in which the U.S. must "outmaneuver geopolitical competitors," the need for Virginia Class submarines has never been more pronounced. The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) estimates Chinese shipbuilding capability at 232 times that of the U.S. The U.S. currently has 49 fast attack submarines, including 22 Virginia Class submarines. The Navy's *Force Design 2045* states a fast attack submarine force goal of 66 by 2045, while the latest *Long Range Navy Shipbuilding Plan* calls for 60–69 fast attack submarines by 2053. While numerous challenges have severely impacted the Virginia program in recent years, improvements can be seen in performance, recruiting, and retention initiatives. *The criticality of bolstering our submarine industrial base to get to and maintain all suppliers on a stable two-per-year production rate cannot be overstated.*

FY25 funding will be used for the construction of the first Virginia Class Block VI hulls—with acute technical upgrades and advanced acoustic superiority, the procurement of long lead time material, and the continuation of design efforts for new capabilities and future technology to ensure the "outmaneuvering of geopolitical competitors" continues to succeed.

## Support Robust Funding to Revitalize the Nation's Submarine Workforce and Manufacturing Capacity

The submarine industrial base, comprised of 2,698 first-tier suppliers across nearly all 50 states, must continue to expand to meet the demands of the submarine enterprise. This expansion, in turn, will continue to support tens of thousands of high-skill, high-wage manufacturing jobs across the country and enable sustained excellence in domestic capability. To date, \$2.3B has been appropriated and authorized to reconstitute the submarine industrial base, benefiting over 198 suppliers in 32 states (FY18–FY23). FY25 funding will continue to support initiatives to expand supply base capacity and capability, develop second sources, outsource additional large-scale manufacturing, and develop new technology.

Attracting, hiring, and retaining skilled shipyard and supply chain manufacturing workers remains a top strategic challenge facing the submarine enterprise. Congressional support has been critical to this effort and there is significant funding for continued submarine workforce initiatives in the FY25 budget request. To enable the construction of one Columbia and two Virginia Class submarines per year, it is estimated the submarine industrial base will need to hire 100,000 employees over the next decade to meet this demand. FY25 funding will expand existing trade training pipelines in Connecticut, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia, establish new regional training pipelines around the nation, as well as attract, train, and retain personnel supporting submarine manufacturing across the nation.

The Submarine Industrial Base Council and its members are proud of their contribution to our nation's security and economy. With your help, we can continue to design and build the world's best nuclear-powered submarines that keep America safe today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Steven Dobos  
Co-Chair, SIBC



Keith Macdowall  
Co-Chair, SIBC



Patricia A. Herschkowitz  
Co-Chair, SIBC