

February 26, 2025

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Submarine Industrial Base Council, we want to thank you for recognizing the vital role that submarines play in our national defense. The submarine industrial base represents the 2,646 first-tier suppliers and thousands of additional lower-tier businesses that comprise the nation's submarine industrial base. These companies provide well-paying jobs to tens of thousands of highly skilled workers in 48 states. For FY26, we request your support for three critical submarine programs.

Columbia Class Submarine Program—Provide Funding for One Columbia Class Submarine in FY26

The Columbia Class ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) is the most advanced deterrent platform ever produced by the United States of America. It 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 hulls and providing persistent strategic deterrence into the 2080s. In October 2020, construction began on the USS DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (SSBN826), the lead hull of the class, which is currently 53% complete. Progress continues in earnest on the USS WISCONSIN (SSBN827), the second hull of the class, which is currently 14% complete.

Virginia Class Attack Submarine Program—Provide Funding for Two Virginia Class Submarines in FY26

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 pace future threats. The need for Virginia-class submarines has never been more pronounced. For example, the Navy's latest Long Range Navy Shipbuilding Plan, informed by the 2023 Battle Force Ship Assessment, calls for 66 fast-attack submarines by 2053. However, the U.S. currently has only 52 fast-attack submarines, including 24 Virginia Class submarines. By contrast, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) estimates that the Chinese shipbuilding capability is over 200 times that of the U.S., marking China as the pacing global threat for ship and submarine production.

After a rapid reduction in demand following the end of the Cold War and subsequent 20 years of low-rate production, the nuclear shipbuilding industrial base is struggling to rapidly ramp production rates to meet critical fleet needs. Recent historically high inflation, the generational change in workforce demographics, and below-market wages place the industry at a critical juncture as the prime nuclear shipyards and the Navy work towards the acquisition of the next 17 nuclear submarines (two Block V Virginia Class, ten Block VI Virginia Class, and five Columbia Class ballistic missile submarines). Steady funding and stable construction profiles for the Virginia Class Submarine are critical while the industrial base works to overcome these challenges.

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

Congressionally-supported workforce and supplier development funding has begun to revitalize the submarine enterprise and infuse much-needed resiliency within domestic shipbuilding. The Submarine Industrial Base (SIB), now comprised of 2,646 first-tier suppliers across 48 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 and U.S. undersea dominance. The significance of these historic investments within the SIB cannot be overstated, and they remain a lifeline for the tens of thousands of dedicated SIB employees and their essential product lines that are foundational to our national defense.

As a testament to the criticality of submarine manufacturing, over \$4.5B has been appropriated and authorized to reconstitute the submarine industrial base (FY18–FY24), which has benefited over 230+ suppliers in 32 states. The success of this supplier development funding has been realized through developing new suppliers, enhancing the capabilities of current suppliers, and investing in critical capacity expansions, all of which bolster the strength of the submarine industrial base. While funding to date has begun to yield results, investments of this scale take years to yield their full impact. Thus far, this funding has resulted in:

- **The percentage of on-pace Sequence Critical Material (SCM) has significantly increased for Columbia and increased by 40% for Virginia over the past 3 years.**
- **Enabling approximately 6 million man-hours of annual large-scale fabrication to be outsourced to the supply base**
- **130+ projects expanding capability and capacity in critical areas such as large structural fabrication, valves, fittings, castings, forgings, and mechanical items**
- **26 projects developing alternative/second sources for critical components that are currently either single or sole-source**

While this funding has made measurable differences within submarine production, continued investment is needed. FY26 funding will continue to support initiatives to expand industrial base capacity and capability, develop alternate sources, outsource additional large-scale manufacturing, and develop new technology and workforce pipelines across the country.


Sincerely,



Steven Dobos
Co-Chair, SIBC



Keith Macdowall
Co-Chair, SIBC



Patricia A. Herschkowitz
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