



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 10, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to reiterate our strong support not just for the Australian-United Kingdom-United States security pact (AUKUS) but also, in particular, the commitment to develop an Australian nuclear-powered submarine capability. We appreciate that the consultation period between the trilateral AUKUS partners has diligently explored a range of options for meeting this goal, and we eagerly look forward to the results of those discussions.

As trilateral consultations continue, it is important to underscore that achieving the undersea goals of AUKUS will be a multi-decade and multi-generational effort – one that is worth embarking on for the security of our nation and that of our allies in the Indo-Pacific. Whatever the outcome of the trilateral consultation period, robust and close coordination between your administration, the Navy, the Congress, and our allies is absolutely essential to its successful implementation. Making AUKUS a reality will likely require many statutory, regulatory and policy changes that require bipartisan Congressional support and approval - and the sooner that these discussions can begin, the better.

Far from a zero-sum game, the potential for the United States to provide or build new submarines under AUKUS, should that be the recommendation of the trilateral consultation, could very well be a ‘rising tide that lifts all boats.’ As strong supporters of our domestic submarine industrial base and members who understand the unmatched value of our undersea platforms, we are committed to meeting our domestic undersea requirements in the near and long-term, as well as providing our closest ally with an undersea capability to better posture itself in the region. There is no doubt that our domestic submarine industrial base – like the larger defense industry, domestic manufacturing sector, and nearly every other sector of our national and global economy – has been strained by COVID-19 pandemic. However, this need not be a static picture in the coming decades over which AUKUS will be carried out. While the present challenges in delivering new *Virginia* class submarines need to be fully considered in any discussion about the way ahead, so too must be the potential value and benefit of a fully integrated industrial base that could come as a result.

We note that your administration requested, and the Congress approved, \$768 million for Fiscal Year 2023 to support a broad range of undersea workforce development, industrial base expansion, and supplier development efforts to strengthen our domestic submarine construction capabilities. Furthermore, we support the administration's plans to invest an additional \$1.6 billion in the submarine industrial base across the Future Years Defense Program to improve production efforts in the following years. These resources, coupled with the December 21, 2021, Presidential determination and prior industrial base investments aimed at addressing pre-COVID production challenges, are directed at improving and strengthening our domestic industrial base in support of sustained two a year production rate of *Virginia* class submarines while also ramping up on *Columbia*. Even then, the United States Navy's force structure drops from 50 attack submarines today to 46 in 2028 and only begins to meet the 66-attack submarine requirement in the late 2040s at the earliest.

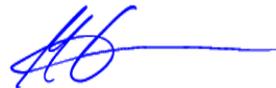
While it is essential to maintain a minimum of two submarines a year for the United States to meet our national security requirements, we are supportive of expanding the industrial base to meet AUKUS expectations. We particularly believe that an expansion of our industrial base beyond two submarines would support the early provisioning of existing Virginia class submarines to be made available concurrent with the retirement of the Collins class attack submarines. These realities should not be viewed as a reason not to pursue US build submarine options in AUKUS but rather as a unique opportunity to leverage the support and resources possible under AUKUS to grow our industrial base to support both US and Australian submarine construction, recognizing that the full fruition of AUKUS over many decades will result in Australia's ability to domestically produce nuclear-powered submarines. This could create a strong and long-term demand signal that this and successive administrations, the Navy and industry can prepare for, should that be the outcome of this process.

Any proposals that come from the completion of the consultation process will require and receive close Congressional scrutiny, balancing out our undersea needs here at home, the strategic security goals of AUKUS and the health and future of our industrial base. We do not, however, see these as mutually exclusive aims. We look forward to your administration's engagement with Congress as this process moves ahead.

Sincerely,



JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress



MIKE GALLAGHER
Member of Congress



ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress



MIKE ROGERS
Member of Congress



DONALD NORCROSS
Member of Congress



ROB WITTMAN
Member of Congress



DEREK KILMER
Member of Congress



BLAKE MOORE
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TRENT KELLY
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