

NAVY LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
ISSUE BRIEF: NAVY READINESS, CAPACITY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE
April 18, 2024



ASK: Maintain procurement funding for two Virginia-class submarines in FY25

ASK: Develop a bipartisan “Ships Act” modeled on the CHIPS Act

ASK: Ensure an annual Navy SCN budget of at least \$35 billion

Maintain procurement funding for two Virginia-class Submarines in FY25

The Virginia-class submarine is critical to America’s undersea strength and ability to deter or defeat a great power competitor like China. The DOD FY25 budget request broke the anticipated two-per-year Virginia-class funding and instead seeks to fund only one such vessel. In a bipartisan letter, members of the House Armed Services Committee stated clearly that now is not the time to create instability and uncertainty in the supply chain at home and in deterrence abroad. We have also committed to providing 3-5 of our Virginia-class submarines to Australia in the coming years as a result of the AUKUS agreement. Simply put, the Virginia-class submarine is too valuable a weapon system to underfund. Any concerns about shipyard capacity have been ameliorated by the recent appropriation of over \$3 billion for the submarine industrial base included in the supplemental bills which passed Congress in April.

Develop a bipartisan “Ships Act” modeled on the CHIPS Act

As the Center for Naval Analyses completes the National Maritime Strategy study as mandated by Congress and overseen by the Maritime Administration, it is imperative that the study’s findings be compiled into a bipartisan bill to strengthen America’s shipbuilding capacity just as the CHIPS Act strengthened America’s ability to produce microchips domestically. The CHIPS act restored vital manufacturing and production capacity to the United States while also strengthening supply chains to ensure American security in this vital technology. The same must be done for shipbuilding, which is a national security imperative. This bill must address the gaps in our shipbuilding industrial base, and ways to make us competitive with other global shipbuilding superpowers by incentivizing investment from the public and private sectors.

Ensure an annual Navy SCN budget of at least \$35 billion

To accomplish all of these things, from the Virginia-class procurements to the demand signal needed for expanded DOD shipbuilding overall, we find that an annual Navy SCN budget of at least \$35 billion is required. This figure has been confirmed through the research conducted by the Navy League’s Maritime Policy Committee, taking into account inflation, multi-year procurement policies, and the Navy shipbuilding plan.

We ask Congress to ensure that the Virginia-class submarine program does not fall behind schedule, that the findings of the Center for Naval Analyses maritime study be compiled into a bipartisan Ships Act modeled on the CHIPS Act, and that Congress provide at least \$35 billion in annual Navy SCN funding.