

# Senators Ask Administration to Assess Proposal to Address Submarine Production Delays



Oct. 25, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-Virginia), Chair of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower, U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-Connecticut), and U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut) led a bipartisan group of their colleagues in asking the Biden Administration to address funding shortfalls for submarine programs as they consider funding levels for Fiscal Year 2025. In two separate letters to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Shalanda Young and Department of the Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro, the lawmakers also urged the Administration to carefully assess the merits of the proposed Shipbuilder Accountability and Workforce Support (SAWS) agreement—which would restructure

how the Navy pays for submarines—as a potential solution to address delays and get the programs back on track.

While Congress has invested over \$2.3 billion between 2018 and 2023 and an additional \$3 billion this year as part of a [national security supplemental](#) in the nation's submarine industrial base, the Virginia-class and Columbia-class submarine programs face significant delays and are expected to be over budget. The on-time completion of Virginia-class submarines, which are built in Virginia and Connecticut, is especially critical to the fulfillment of the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) trilateral partnership, through which the United States will sell at least two submarines to Australia to bolster security in the Indo-Pacific.

In their letter to OMB Director Young, the members wrote, “The United States’ submarine programs provide our nation an undersea advantage that is critical to our national security... Based on the information available so far, the Shipbuilder Accountability and Workforce Support (SAWS) agreement strikes us as a promising approach to ensure our submarine industrial base rises to the occasion, accelerates submarine production, and fully meets the critical and building demand on U.S. shipyards... We request that you give all due consideration to this initiative, while ensuring it includes the accountability and leverage measures necessary to ensure our federal investments in submarine production go as far as possible in getting these critical programs on track.”

In their letter to Secretary of the Navy Del Toro, the members wrote, “It is our understanding that over months of conversation Pentagon leadership, the Navy, and industry reached an agreement to maximize use of taxpayer funding for construction of the next tranche of Columbia-class and Virginia-class submarines – including by raising wages to attract and retain America’s skilled and organized shipyard workforce, addressing rising costs, and advancing much-needed infrastructure investments, all to improve program reliability

and schedule.”

“We therefore urge more consistent communication with Congress and with OMB so that all parties clearly understand the Navy’s position on SAWS and overall plans to get our nation’s submarine production on track,” they continued. “It is critical that our submarine programs be on schedule and on budget.”

In addition to Kaine, Murphy, and Blumenthal, the letters were signed by U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-New Hampshire), Angus King (I-Maine), Kevin Cramer (R-North Dakota), and Mark R. Warner (D-Virginia).

The letter to OMB is available [here](#). The letter to the Navy is available [here](#).