Program Manager Says Industrial Base Can Handle Third Virginia-Class Sub



The Virginia-class attack submarine USS John Warner arrives in January at Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut, to complete routine maintenance and training. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Steven Hoskins

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The addition of a third Virginia-class submarine to the fiscal 2020 budget proposal won't cause significant disruption to the industrial base because the program has given enough lead time before the sub needs to be built, the program's manager said May 7 at Navy League's Sea-Air-Space exposition.

Capt. Christopher Hanson, the U.S. Navy's Virginia-class program manager, acknowledged that the decision years ago to increase procurement from one sub per year to two caused "some vendors [to] struggle," but that the industry is able to handle a third sub because enough lead time has been built in. The addition won't cause a shock in the production line, Hanson said.

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>
> *Capt. Christopher Hanson, Virginia-class program manager*

By adding a third sub to the budget, the Navy sends a "very clear signal of what's coming," allowing vendors to adjust and prepare, he added.

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This request will allow the Navy to immediately get orders out to the vendors so they can fill those orders. And it’s not anything they can’t handle, Hanson said, arguing that they are simply asking the industrial base to deliver 11 subs instead of 10 over the next five years.

The Navy is still striving to get construction time of Virginia-class subs down to 60 months, although it has recently stalled in the area of 66 to 68 months. Hanson said the goal is still 60 months, although he acknowledged it was not a guarantee. “Would I bet my life on 60 months? Probably not.”