SECNAV Del Toro Stresses DON's Support of Small Businesses During National 8(a) Conference



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Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro today spoke to hundreds of small business owners at the National 8(a) Association Small Business Conference in Atlanta, Feb. 6.

The National 8(a) Association is a non-profit that provides education and guidance for small businesses including minority, aspiring, current and graduate 8(a), HUBZone, SDVOB, VOSB, SDB, WOSB, DBE, and teaming partnerships.

Secretary Del Toro stressed the Department of the Navy's Office of Small Business Program's (DON OSBP) proven

commitment to aggressively expanding small business opportunity to partner with the DON on its significant procurement investments for goods and services.

“In fiscal year 2023, we spent $20.1 billion on contracts with small businesses, exceeding our target goal for the year by over 17 percent,” said Secretary Del Toro. “Furthermore, we exceeded our sub-category goals for service-disabled Veteran-owned, women-owned, and HUBZone, and came within 0.04% of meeting our small, disadvantaged business goal. And this year, we are well on our way to meeting our goals, and we’re not even at the halfway point, with billions of dollars committed to contracts with small businesses across all categories.”

Secretary Del Toro also discussed the importance the DON’s puts on supporting the small business community.

“The National 8(a) Association and other organizations like it play a critical role in educating, guiding, and supporting small businesses as they prepare to work with the federal government, and we are grateful for the role they play in our small business ecosystem,” said Secretary Del Toro. “From my vantage point as Secretary of the Navy, a healthy, diverse industrial base made up of companies of all sizes—founded by American entrepreneurs from all walks of life—is absolutely crucial to the success of our Navy and our Marine Corps.”

Secretary Del Toro reiterated his commitment to working with small businesses to provide the Navy and Marine Corps team with the support, systems, and platforms needed to confront the global challenges we face today.

“Strengthening maritime dominance is focused on ensuring our Sailors and Marines have the right mix of platforms and capabilities so that they are prepared to deter our nation’s potential adversaries, and, if called upon, fight and decisively win our Nation’s wars,” said Secretary Del Toro. “In terms of cutting-edge capabilities, we are working with

small businesses to secure our advantages in technology areas such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, cybersecurity, and unmanned systems.

Before leaving the conference in Atlanta, Secretary Del Toro hosted a roundtable with about two dozen small business owners to continue the dialogue on how small businesses and the DON can support each other.

“For the companies represented here that are focused on improving the lives of our personnel, whether it be through delivering world-class education and training, or providing resources to support the health and resiliency of our Navy and Marine Corps communities, we welcome the opportunity to learn more about your offerings during or after this week’s conference,” said Secretary Del Toro.

Atlanta is the first leg a travel for Secretary Del Toro this week. Next, he travels to Puerto Rico, where he will participate in a U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency Business Roundtable and a joint U.S. Departments of Defense and Navy Business Roundtable. He’ll also have key leader engagements and national call to service events.

Secretary Del Toro’s full remarks from the National 8(a) Association Small Business Conference can be found here.