

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 26, 2023

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

Dear President Biden,

We support the vision of the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) partnership and its potential to change the strategic landscape in the Indo-Pacific. The AUKUS agreement is vitally important, but we must simultaneously protect U.S. national security.

Accordingly, we urge you to send Congress immediately an AUKUS-specific request for appropriations and authorities alongside a multi-year plan to increase U.S. submarine production to a minimum of 2.5 *Virginia*-class attack submarines per year. It is time to make generational investments in U.S. submarine production capacity, including supplier and workforce development initiatives.

AUKUS has broad support because of its potential to improve the national security of all three countries. Implementing this deal will require a historic degree of cooperation and trust among the three countries, and here at home, between the executive and legislative branches of our government.

The administration's current plan requires the transfer of three U.S. *Virginia*-class attack submarines to Australia from the existing U.S. submarine fleet without a clear plan for replacing these submarines. This plan, if implemented without change, would unacceptably weaken the U.S. fleet even as China seeks to expand its military power and influence.

The U.S. Navy's military requirement is 66 nuclear attack submarines. Today, there are only 49 in the fleet. Further, as older nuclear submarines retire faster than they are replaced, the Navy projects the inventory will decline to 46 by 2030. Under the current AUKUS plan to transfer U.S. *Virginia*-class submarines to a partner nation before meeting the Navy's own requirements, the number of available nuclear submarines in the U.S. submarine fleet would be lowered further. This is a risk we should not take.

The U.S. submarine industrial base is currently producing an average of 1.2 *Virginia*-class attack submarines per year, despite needing to produce two per year. To make up for the sale of at least three attack submarines to Australia, the U.S. would have to produce somewhere between 2.3 to 2.5 submarines per year to avoid further shrinking our fleet's operational capacity.

The administration and Congress need to be willing to make the necessary investments into the U.S. submarine industrial base that will advance the security of the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

We look forward to working with your administration to take the steps to implement the vision of AUKUS fully, including investments in the U.S. submarine industrial base. The enhanced security of the United States – and Australia and the United Kingdom – depend on our mutual collaboration and cooperation.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Mitch McConnell
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Mitt Romney
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Ted Budd
United States Senator



Eric S. Schmitt
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Pete Ricketts
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



John Thune
United States Senator



Katie Boyd Britt
United States Senator



Markwayne Mullin
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator

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Robert Wittman
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Doug Lamborn in blue ink.

Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Jen Kiggans in blue ink.

Jen Kiggans
Member of Congress