



Action Alert

Legislative Alert #112-12: Address Navy Equipment Shortfalls from the FY13 Budget in the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense

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Authorization Act

DEFENSE

Issue Background: On 13 February 2012, the President released the Defense Budget for Fiscal Year 2013. The President's Budget request included \$43.9 billion for Navy and Marine Corps Equipment funding. This is a decrease of \$2.3 billion below the amount programmed for FY12 (5% decrease). An overall reduction in defense funding and changing priorities (due to the current fiscal climate) within the FY13 Budget request for the Navy resulted in the proposed decommissioning of seven older Cruisers (six of which had been scheduled for modernization), delaying the Ohio Class Submarine (SSBN-X) replacement program by two years, build two fewer Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) over the next five years (one from each variant builder), and build only 1 Virginia Class Submarine (SSN) in 2014 and delay it to 2018.

Action Required: Contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to consider in the Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), strategy over budget when deciding which platforms to fund and which ones to cut, keeping with the Navy's goal of a 300 plus fleet. It is important that as these tough budget decisions are being made, that the Department of Defense (DOD) look at the ships and platforms that have proven themselves as a value in both capability and cost, than to make indiscriminate cuts just because they are newer platforms.

Details (To Be Put Into Letter):

As Congress proceeds with consideration of the Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), currently in the forms of H.R. 4310 and S. 2467, it is important that the authorized funding levels for Navy equipment meet the needs of our Navy as recommended by the President's Strategic Guidance released this past January. In the Strategic Guidance, the Administration highlights that, "we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region... [providing] security in the broader Indian Ocean region." With this focus towards a stronger presence in the seas of the Asia-Pacific theater, the FY13 Budget Request appears counter to this new strategy as it requests the decommissioning of seven older Cruisers (six of which had been scheduled for modernization), delaying the Ohio Class Submarine (SSBN-X) replacement program by two years, building two fewer Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) over the next five years (one from each variant builder), and building only 1 Virginia Class Submarine (SSN) in 2014 and delay it to 2018.

On 15 March 2012, in a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the FY13 Budget Request, the Secretary of the Navy highlighted how the goal is to have a Navy of over 300 ships by no later than 2019. In the same hearing, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), testified that “In my view, if sequestration kicks in... I’m looking at not 285 ships in a given year. I’m looking at 230. We don’t have enough force structure to accrue that kind of savings without reducing procurement.” However, this raises the concern that as budget cuts progress, with the looming concern of Department of Defense (DOD) sequestration, our fleet size could be drastically reduced, and consequently, so could our capabilities with forward force projection.

It is vital to our national security interests that Congress reviews these equipment concerns in the FY13 NDAA, and ensure that our Navy’s capabilities are driven by strategic positioning as requested by the Administration (adequately equipping this need), and not a budget driven approach that would seek to diminish our capabilities in a volatile region as the Asia-Pacific theater.

Take Action: Click the “Take Action” link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators and Representatives. This is the quickest and most effective method of expressing your views to Congress. You can also write and/or e-mail the ‘Details’ section or edit as you desire for a more personalized communication . Also, contact friends and family and urge them to use the Contact Congress feature on AUSN’s website as well. Please direct any questions concerning this issue to our Director of Legislation, Anthony Wallis, at 703-548-5800 or at Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org.