H.R. 3838—STREAMLINING PROCUREMENT FOR EFFECTIVE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY AND NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

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This section would require the Secretary of the Navy to develop and implement a strategy for direct investment in the maritime industrial base to address cost and schedule challenges for shipbuilding programs. Additionally, the strategy would be required to include considerations for data collection as well as the use of artificial intelligence for supply chain monitoring. No later than 210 days after enactment, the Secretary of the Navy would also be required to provide a report to the congressional defense committees on relevant details of the required strategy and implementation.

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new vessels constructed in the United States for each used, foreign-constructed vessel after a tenth vessel is procured. Further, section 2218 of title 10, United States Code, would be amended to prohibit the procurement of used, foreign-constructed vessels that were constructed in the People's Republic of China or a by a Chinese military company.

Section 1012—Requirements for Amphibious Warfare Ship Force Structure

This section would require the Department of the Navy to adjust maintenance schedules and repair actions to maintain the minimum number of available amphibious warships needed to meet operational requirements. An available amphibious warship would be defined as an amphibious assault ship (general purpose) (LHA), an amphibious assault ship (multi-purpose) (LHD), an amphibious transport dock (LPD), or a dock landing ship (LSD) that does not have a temporary critical limiting restriction, is not in a maintenance phase, is not in post-delivery testing, and is not in the process of decommissioning.

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This section would require the Senior Technical Authority to report directly to the program executive officer for each vessel class. Further, the Senior Technical Authority would be responsible for determining that all design requirements are directly related to the capability development document for the vessel class and may not approve any design requirements that are unnecessary.

Section 1014—Alternative Contracting Authority for United States Naval Ships

This section would allow the Secretary of the Navy to utilize a Vessel Construction Manager for vessels to be designated as a United States Naval Ship and operated by civilian or commercial mariners.

Section 1016—Metrics for Basic and Functional Design for Ship Construction

This section would require the Secretary of the Navy to select a metric to measure the progression of basic and functional design completion as required in section 8669c(1) of title 10, United States Code.

Section 1017—Sense of Congress Regarding Naming of Vessel for Battle of Dai Do

This section would express a sense of Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name an amphibious or expeditionary class vessel for the Battle of Dai Do (Vietnam war).

SUBTITLE E—REPORTS

Section 1051—Mobility Capability Requirements Study

This section extends the due date of the Mobility Capability Requirements Study.

SUBTITLE F—OTHER MATTERS

Section 1072—Extension of the National Commission on the Future of the Navy

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118-159) extended the deadline for the Navy commission to January 1, 2026. Because of the recent vacancy and lack of appropriation the commission has not begun working on its recommendations. This section would extend the deadline by 1 year.

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This section would extend the eligibility of cruise vessels for grants to fund shore power projects under the Port Infrastructure Development Program through fiscal year 2026.

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Section 3532—Cargoes Procured, Furnished, or Financed by United States Government

This section would amend section 55305 of title 46, United States Code, to make changes to cargo preference requirements for cargoes procured, financed, or otherwise obtained for the Department of Transportation. The Secretary of Transportation or the recipient of such financing would be required to take necessary and practicable steps to ensure that 100 percent of the gross tonnage of that cargo is transported on privately-owned vessels of the United States.

Section 3533—Treatment of the University of Louisiana Maritime Academy as a State Maritime Academy

This section would allow the University of Louisiana Maritime Academy to be provisionally treated as a State Maritime Academy under chapter 515 of title 46, United States Code.

BILL LANGUAGE

Subtitle B—Navy Programs

SEC. 111 [Log 82765]. CONTRACT AUTHORITY FOR FORD CLASS AIRCRAFT CARRIER PROGRAM.

(a) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts for the procurement of not more than two Ford class aircraft carriers.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE PROCUREMENT AND ECONOMIC ORDER QUANTITY.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts for advance procurement, advance construction, and material and equipment in economic order quantities associated with the procurement of the Ford class aircraft carriers for which contracts are authorized under subsection (a).

(c) USE OF INCREMENTAL FUNDING.—With respect to a contract entered into under subsection (a) or (b), the Secretary of the Navy may use incremental funding to make payments under the contract.

(d) LIABILITY.—Any contract entered into under subsection (a) or (b) shall provide that—

(1) any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose; and

(2) the total liability of the Federal Government for termination of any contract entered into shall be

limited to the total amount of funding obligated to the contract at time of termination.

SEC. 112 [Log 82780]. CONTRACT AUTHORITY FOR COLUMBIA CLASS SUBMARINE PROGRAM.

(a) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into a contract, beginning with fiscal year 2026, for the procurement of up to five Columbia class submarines.

(b) INCREMENTAL FUNDING.—With respect to a contract entered into under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Navy may use incremental funding to make payments under the contract.

(c) FUNDING AND LIABILITY.—Any contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that—

(1) any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose; and

(2) the total liability of the Federal Government for termination of any contract entered into shall be limited to the total amount of funding obligated to the contract at time of termination.

SEC. 113 [Log 82766]. AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE PROCUREMENT OF CERTAIN COMPONENTS TO SUPPORT CONTINUOUS PRODUCTION OF VIRGINIA CLASS SUBMARINES.

(a) IN GENERAL.— The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts, prior to ship authorization, for the advance procurement of covered components for Virginia class submarines, including procurement of such components in economic order quantities when cost savings are achievable.

(b) FUNDING AND LIABILITY.—Any contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that—

(1) any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose; and

(2) the total liability to the Federal Government for termination of the contract shall be limited to the total amount of funding obligated for the contract at the time of termination.

(c) BUDGET REQUESTS.—In the budget justification materials submitted in support of the budget of the Department of Defense (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code) for fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary of the Navy shall include a separate budget display identifying the amounts requested pursuant to this

section set forth by the specific program, project, or activity under the Virginia class submarine program for which such funds are requested.

(d) COVERED COMPONENTS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered components'' means the following components for Virginia class submarines:

(1) Propulsion plant equipment.

(2) Diesel Systems and associated components.

(3) Castings, forgings, and tank structures.

(4) Air flasks.

(5) Payload tubes.

(6) Major Valves And Associated Components.

(7) Hatches.

(8) Steering and drive components.

(9) Major Pumps And Motors.

(10) Snorkel mast and components.

(11) Torpedo tubes.

(12) Atmosphere control equipment.

SEC. 114 [Log 82424]. MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY FOR YARD, REPAIR, BERTHING, AND MESSING BARGES.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT.—Subject to section 3501 of title 10, United States Code, the Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more multiyear contracts, beginning with the fiscal year 2026 program year, for the procurement of Yard, Repair, Berthing, and Messing Barges and associated material.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE PROCUREMENT.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts, beginning in fiscal year 2026, for advance procurement associated with the barges for which authorization to enter into a multiyear procurement contract is provided under subsection (a), which may include procurement of economic order quantities of material and equipment for such barges when cost savings are achievable.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS AND TERMINATION LIABILITY.—Any contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that—

(1) any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose; and

(2) the total liability of the Federal Government for termination of the contract shall be limited to

the total amount of funding obligated to the contract at the time of termination.

SEC. 115 [Log 82361]. VESSEL CONSTRUCTION MANAGER FOR FOLLOW-ON SHIPS OF THE LANDING SHIP MEDIUM PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—After the construction of the lead ship of the Landing Ship Medium program has commenced, the Secretary of the Navy shall seek to enter into an agreement with an appropriate vessel construction manager pursuant to which the vessel construction manager shall seek to enter into one or more contracts for the construction of not more than 8 additional landing ships under the program.

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL SHIPS.—The additional landing ships authorized to be constructed under subsection (a), shall be nondevelopmental items constructed using a design that is—

(1) the same as the design of the lead ship; or

(2) derived from such design.

(c) LEAD SHIP DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''lead ship'' means the first landing ship procured as a commercial or nondevelopmental item as authorized under section 128(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118–159).

SEC. 116 [Log 82761]. LIMITATION ON CONSTRUCTION OF MODULAR ATTACK SURFACE CRAFT.

The Secretary of the Navy may not enter into a contract or other agreement that includes a scope of work, including priced or unpriced options, for the construction, advance procurement, or long-lead material of the lead ship of the Modular Attack Surface Craft program until the Secretary certifies to the congressional defense committees that such ship will be designed and constructed for the primary purpose of operating autonomously.

SEC. 117 [Log 82423]. INCLUSION OF AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE SHIP SPARES AND REPAIR PARTS AS A SEPARATE LINE ITEM IN NAVY BUDGET JUSTIFICATION MATERIALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the budget justification materials submitted to Congress in support of the Department of the Defense budget for fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code), the Secretary of the Navy shall include one or more dedicated line items for spare parts and repair parts for amphibious warfare ships in the budget display for other procurement, Navy.

(b) AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE SHIP DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''amphibious warfare ship'' has the meaning given that term in section 8062(h) of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 118 [Log 82208]. STRATEGY FOR NAVY INVESTMENT IN AND SUPPORT FOR THE MARITIME INDUSTRIAL BASE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall develop and implement a strategy for investing in and supporting the maritime industrial base to address cost and schedule challenges for surface and submarine shipbuilding programs.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy under subsection (a) shall—

(1) focus on ensuring reliable supplies of sequence critical components for submarine and surface shipbuilding programs; and

(2) include measures—

(A) to identify key performance indicators to measure return on investment;

(B) to centralize data collection to support further analysis of maritime industrial base performance; and

(C) to apply artificial intelligence to monitor and predict potential supply chain challenges, including potential disruptions, material shortages, delivery delays, and other such factors.

(c) REPORT.—Following completion of the strategy required under subsection (a), but not later than 210 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the strategy. The report shall include—

(1) a summary of the strategy;

(2) timelines for implementation of the strategy; and

(3) an explanation of how the strategy is expected to address cost and schedule challenges for surface and submarine shipbuilding programs.

Subtitle C—Air Force Programs

SEC. 121 [Log 82176]. MODIFICATION OF MINIMUM INVENTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR AIR REFUELING TANKER AIRCRAFT.

(a) MINIMUM INVENTORY REQUIREMENT.—Section 9062(j) of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''a total aircraft inventory of air refueling tanker aircraft of not less than 466 aircraft'' and inserting ''a total aircraft inventory of air refueling tanker aircraft—

''(A) of not less than 466 aircraft during the period ending on September 30, 2026;

''(B) of not less than 485 aircraft during the period beginning on October 1, 2026, and ending on September 30, 2027; and

''(C) of not less than 504 aircraft beginning on October 1, 2027.''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''below 466'' and inserting ''below the applicable level specified in paragraph (1)''.

(b) PROHIBITION ON REDUCTION OF KC–135 AIRCRAFT IN PMAI OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2026 for the Air Force

may be obligated or expended to reduce the number of KC–135 aircraft designated as primary mission aircraft inventory within the reserve components of the Air Force.

(2) PRIMARY MISSION AIRCRAFT INVENTORY DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''primary mission aircraft inventory'' has the meaning given that term in section 9062(i)(2)(B) of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 122 [Log 82187]. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO C–130 AIRCRAFT.

(a) EXTENSION OF MINIMUM INVENTORY REQUIREMENT.—Section 146(a)(3)(B) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117–263; 136 Stat. 2455), as amended by section 145(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118–159), is amended by striking ''2025'' and inserting ''2026''.

(b) EXTENSION OF PROHIBITION ON REDUCTION OF C-130 AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO NATIONAL GUARD.—Section 146(b)(1) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117–263; 136 Stat. 2455), as amended by section 145(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118–159), is amended by striking ''2025'' and inserting ''2026''.

SEC. 123 [Log 82247]. PRESERVATION OF CERTAIN RETIRED KC–10 AIRCRAFT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsections (b) and (c), the Secretary of the Air Force shall preserve each KC–10 aircraft that is retired by the Secretary during a period in which the total inventory of air refueling aircraft of the Air Force is less than 504.

(b) MANNER OF PRESERVATION.—The retired KC–10 aircraft preserved under subsection (a) shall be preserved such that each aircraft—

(1) is stored in flyable condition;

(2) can be returned to service as an air refueling aircraft (which shall include retaining the air refueling boom on the aircraft); and

(3) is not used to supply parts to other aircraft unless specifically authorized by the Secretary of Defense upon a request by the Secretary of the Air Force.

(c) AUTHORITY TO DISPOSE OF PRESERVED AIRCRAFT.—A KC–10 aircraft preserved under subsection (a) may be disposed of in accordance with chapter 5 of title 40, United States Code.

SEC. 124 [Log 82770]. LIMITATION ON PROCUREMENT OF KC–46 AIRCRAFT PENDING CERTIFICATION ON CORRECTION OF DEFICIENCIES.

(a) LIMITATION.—The Secretary of Defense may not accept or take delivery of covered KC–46 aircraft in excess of the maximum quantity specified in subsection (c) until the Secretary—

(1) certifies to the congressional defense committees that the Secretary has developed and is implementing a plan of corrective actions and milestones to resolve all Category 1 deficiencies identified with respect to KC–46 aircraft; and

(2) submits such plan to such committees, which shall include—

(A) an estimate of the total amount of funds required to complete implementation of the plan;

(B) realistic event-driven schedules to achieve the objectives of the plan; and

(C) a schedule risk assessment to a minimum of 80 percent confidence level.

(b) FORM.—The plan described in subsection (a)(2) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex.

(c) MAXIMUM QUANTITY.—The maximum quantity of covered KC–46 aircraft specified in this subsection is 183 aircraft.

(d) COVERED KC–46 AIRCRAFT DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered KC–46 aircraft'' means new production KC–46 aircraft the procurement of which is fully funded by the United States.

SEC. 125 [Log 82177]. REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO EXECUTIVE AIRLIFT AIRCRAFT.

(a) ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Air Force shall conduct an analysis of alternatives to identify potential solutions for the recapitalization of the executive airlift aircraft fleet of the Air Force. In conducting such analysis, the Secretary shall seek to identify aircraft solutions that have capabilities comparable to the capabilities of commercial passenger aircraft in terms of range.

(2) TIMELINE.—The Secretary of the Air Force shall—

(A) initiate the analysis of alternatives required under paragraph (1) not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(B) complete such analysis not later than April 1, 2026.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after completing the analysis of alternatives required under paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Air Force shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the results of the analysis.

(b) PRIORITIZATION STANDARDS.—Not later than December 1, 2025, the Secretary of the Air Force shall establish standards for prioritizing access to executive airlift aircraft among authorized users of such aircraft within the Federal Government.

(c) PERSONNEL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 1, 2026, the Secretary of Defense shall assign a career appointee (as that term is defined in section 3132(a) of title 5, United States Code) in the Senior Executive Service at the Department of Defense to coordinate—

(A) the efficient tasking of executive airlift aircraft; and

(B) compliance with rules, regulations, policies and guidance relating to such aircraft, including the prioritization standards developed under subsection (b).

(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The career appointee assigned under paragraph (1) shall, as determined by the Secretary, have knowledge and experience relating to executive airlift aircraft, including familiarity with the executive airlift fleets of the Armed Forces and knowledge of policies and procedures for the prioritization of executive airlift users.

Subtitle B—Naval Vessels

SEC. 1011 [Log 82205]. LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS IN THE NATIONAL DEFENSE SEALIFT FUND TO PURCHASE CERTAIN USED FOREIGN CONSTRUCTED VESSELS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2218 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (f)—

(A) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ''(other than an excluded vessel)'' after ''any used vessel'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''(other than an excluded vessel)'' after ''a used vessel'';

(iii) by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following new subparagraph (C):

''(C) The Secretary may only use the authority under this paragraph to purchase more than 10 foreign-constructed vessels if, for each such vessel so purchased after the tenth vessel, the Secretary purchases two vessels under paragraph (4).''.

(iv) in subsection (D), by striking ''subparagraph (A)'' and inserting ''this paragraph'';

(v) by striking subparagraph (E) and redesignating subparagraphs (F) and (G) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (4):

''(4) A vessel purchased under this paragraph is a vessel—

''(A) purchased using funds in the National Defense Sealift Fund

''(B) constructed in a ship yard located in the United States; and

''(C) the construction of which is managed by a commercial vessel construction manager.''; and

(2) in subsection (k), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) The term 'excluded vessel' means a vessel that was—

''(A) constructed or substantially modified by an entity located in the People's Republic of China; or

''(B) constructed by a Chinese military company, as such term is defined in section 1260H(d)(1) of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116–283; 10 U.S.C. 113 note).''.

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.—Section 2218 of title 10, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), is further amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1)(D), by striking ''section 11 of the Merchant Ship Sales Act of 1946 (50 U.S.C. 4405)'' and inserting ''section 57100 of title 46'';

(2) in subsection (f)(2), by striking ''section 1424(b) of Public Law 101–510 (104 Stat. 1683)'' and inserting ''section 1424(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991 (Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 8661 note)'';

(3) in subsection (k)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking ''section 1424 of Public Law 101–510 (104 Stat. 1683)'' and inserting ''section 1424 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991 (Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 8661 note)''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)(B), by striking ''section 11 of the Merchant Ship Sales Act of 1946 (50 U.S.C. 4405)'' and inserting ''section 57100 of title 46''.

SEC. 1012 [Log 82513]. REQUIREMENTS FOR AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE SHIP FORCE STRUCTURE.

Section 8062 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) the Navy adjusts scheduled maintenance and repair actions to maintain the minimum number of available amphibious warfare ships to meet operational requirements.''; and

(2) by amending subsection (h) to read as follows:

''(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'amphibious warfare ship' means a ship that is classified as an amphibious assault ship (general purpose) (LHA), an amphibious assault ship (multi-purpose) (LHD), an amphibious transport dock (LPD), or a dock landing ship (LSD).

''(2) The term 'available', with respect to an amphibious warfare ship, means that the ship—

"(A) does not have a temporary critical limiting restriction preventing the conduct of training and operations;

"(B) is not in a maintenance phase;

"(C) is not conducting post-delivery test and trials; and

"(D) is not preparing to decommission.".

SEC. 1013 [Log 82207]. NAVY SENIOR TECHNICAL AUTHORITY.

Section 8669b of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2), by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

''(B) reports directly to the program executive officer.''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''Each Senior''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) Each Senior Technical Authority shall also be responsible for the determination that all design requirements for a vessel class are directly related to a key performance parameter or key system attribute established in the capability development document for the vessel class. Any requirements that the Senior Technical Authority determines are unnecessary to meet a key performance parameter or key system attribute shall not be approved.''.

SEC. 1014 [Log 82211]. ALTERNATIVE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY FOR UNITED STATES NAVAL SHIPS.

Chapter 863 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 8698. Alternative contracting authority for United States Naval Ships

''(a) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into an agreement with an appropriate vessel construction manager, other than the Department of the Navy, under which the vessel construction manager shall enter into a contract for the construction of a vessel to be designated as a United States Naval Ship and operated by civilian or commercial mariners.

''(b) DESIGN STANDARDS AND CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary of the Navy shall ensure that a vessel constructed pursuant to this section is constructed using commercial design standards and commercial construction practices.''.

SEC. 1016 [Log 82217]. METRICS FOR BASIC AND FUNCTIONAL DESIGN FOR SHIP CONSTRUCTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall select a metric to measure the progression of basic and functional design with respect to the construction of ships.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 45 days after the selection of a metric under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on such metric that includes the justification for the selection of the metric.

(c) BASIC AND FUNCTIONAL DESIGN.—In this section, the term ''basic and functional design'' has the meaning given such term in section 8669c(1) of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 1017 [Log 82838]. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING NAMING OF VESSEL FOR BATTLE OF DAI DO.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name an amphibious or expeditionary class vessel for the Battle of Dai Do.

Subtitle E—Reports

SEC. 1051 [Log 82188]. MOBILITY CAPABILITY REQUIREMENTS STUDY.

Section 1068 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118–159) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''one year after the date of the enactment of this Act'' and inserting ''December 23, 2025''; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the paragraph headling, by striking ''BRIEFING'' and inserting ''BRIEFINGS''; and

(ii) by inserting ''and not later than six months after the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026'' after ''this Act''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''one year after the date of the enactment of this Act'' and inserting ''December 23, 2025''.

SEC. 1072 [Log 82422]. EXTENSION OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE NAVY.

Section 1092(a)(4) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117–263; 136 Stat. 2809), as amended by section 1083 of the Service Member Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118–159), is further amended by striking ''January 15, 2026'' and inserting ''January 15, 2027''.

Subtitle A—Maritime Administration

SEC. 3501 [Log 82427]. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR MARITIME ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Transportation for fiscal year 2026, for programs associated with maintaining the United States Merchant Marine, the following amounts:

(1) For expenses necessary to support the United States Merchant Marine Academy, $201,500,000, of which—

(A) $101,500,000 shall be for Academy operations;

(B) $50,000,000 shall be for facilities maintenance and repair and equipment; and

(C) $50,000,000 shall be for the development of a design-build plan for the phased rehabilitation, modernization, and construction of facilities and infrastructure at the United States Merchant Marine Academy in accordance with the Campus Modernization Plan required by section 51329 of title 46, United States Code, as added by [log 82452].

(2) For expenses necessary to support the State maritime academies, $58,800,000, of which—

(A) $4,800,000 shall be for the Student Incentive Payment Program;

(B) $13,000,000 shall be for direct payments for State maritime academies;

(C) $12,000,000 shall be for training ship fuel assistance;

(D) $4,000,000 shall be for offsetting the costs of training ship sharing; and

(E) $25,000,000 shall be for maintenance and repair of State maritime academy training vessels.

(3) For expenses necessary to support the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel program, including funds for construction and necessary expenses to construct shoreside infrastructure to support such vessels, $75,000,000.

(4) For expenses necessary to support Maritime Administration operations and programs, $105,500,000, of which—

(A) $15,000,000 shall be for the maritime environmental and technical assistance program under section 50307 of title 46, United States Code;

(B) $15,000,000 shall be for the United States marine highway program, including to

make grants authorized under section 55601 of title 46, United States Code;

(C) $2,000,000 shall be for the Office of Environment and Compliance, including to assist in the environmental review of grant and permit programs administered by the Maritime Administration; and

(D) $73,500,000 shall be for headquarters operations expenses.

(5) For expenses necessary for the disposal of obsolete vessels in the National Defense Reserve Fleet of the Maritime Administration, $6,000,000.

(6) For expenses necessary to maintain and preserve a United States flag merchant marine to serve the national security needs of the United States under chapter 531 of title 46, United States Code, $390,000,000.

(7) For expenses necessary to maintain and preserve a United States flag merchant marine to serve the national security needs of the United States under chapter 534 of title 46, United States Code, $122,400,000.

(8) For expenses necessary for the loan guarantee program authorized under chapter 537 of title 46, United States Code, $33,700,000, of which—

(A) $30,000,000 may be used for the cost (as such term is defined in section 502(5) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a(5)) of loan guarantees under the program; and

(B) $3,700,000 may be used for administrative expenses relating to loan guarantee commitments under the program.

(9) For expenses necessary to provide assistance to small shipyards and for maritime training programs authorized under section 54101 of title 46, United States Code, $105,000,000.

(10) For expenses necessary to implement the port infrastructure development program, as authorized under section 54301 of title 46, United States Code, subject to the limitation under subsection (b), $550,000,000, to remain available until expended.

(b) LIMITATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No funds may be obligated or expended for the port infrastructure development program pursuant to subsection (a)(9) to make a grant to be used for the purchase of fully automated cargo handling equipment that is remotely operated or remotely monitored with or without the exercise of human intervention or control, if the Secretary of

Transportation determines such equipment would result in a net loss of jobs within a port or port terminal.

(2) REPORT.—If the Secretary makes a determination pursuant to paragraph (1), not later than three days after the date on which such determination is made, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that includes the data and analysis used by the Secretary in making such determination.

Subtitle B—Maritime Infrastructure

SEC. 3511 [Log 82629]. CLARIFICATION REGARDING USE OF PORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FUNDS TO REPLACE CHINESE PORT CRANE HARDWARE OR SOFTWARE.

Section 54301(a)(3)(A)(ii)(III) of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''including projects to improve port resilience;'' and inserting ''including—''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new items:

''(aa) projects to improve port resilience; and

''(bb) projects to upgrade or replace port cranes or parts of port cranes (including hardware and software) that—

''(AA) were installed or provided by the People's Republic of China or any department, ministry, center, agency, or instrumentality of the Government of the People's Republic of China; or

"(BB) are maintained, controlled, or sponsored by the People's Republic of China or any department, ministry, center, agency, or instrumentality of the Government of the People's Republic of China;".

SEC. 3512 [Log 82635]. CLARIFICATION OF CERTAIN AUTHORITIES RELATING TO DEEPWATER PORTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5(a) of the Deepwater Port Act of 1974 (33 U.S.C. 1504(a)) is amended by striking the first sentence and inserting ''Notwithstanding section 888(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 468(b)), the Secretary shall have the authority to issue regulations to carry out the purposes and provisions of this Act, in accordance with the provisions of section 553 of title 5, United States Code, without regard to subsection (a) thereof.''.

(b) NEPA COMPLIANCE.—Section 5 of the Deepwater Port Act of 1974 (33 U.S.C. 1504) is amended by striking subsection (f) and inserting the following:

''(f) NEPA COMPLIANCE.—

''(1) DEFINITION OF LEAD AGENCY.—In this subsection, the term 'lead agency' has the meaning given the term in section 111 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336e).

''(2) LEAD AGENCY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For all applications, the Department of Transportation shall be the Federal lead agency for purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

''(B) EFFECT OF COMPLIANCE.—Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) in accordance with subparagraph (A) shall fulfill the requirement of the Federal lead agency in carrying out the responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) pursuant to this Act.''.

(c) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall transfer the authorities provided to the Coast Guard in part 148 of title 33, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act), except as provided in paragraph (2), to the Secretary of Transportation.

(2) RETENTION OF AUTHORITY.—The Commandant shall retain responsibility for authorities pertaining to design, construction, equipment, and operation of deepwater ports and navigational safety.

(3) UPDATES TO AUTHORITY.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall issue such reg-

ulations as are necessary to reflect the updates to authorities prescribed by this subsection.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section, or the amendments made by this section, may be construed to limit the authorities of other governmental agencies previously delegated authorities of the Deepwater Port Act of 1974 (33 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.) or any other law.

(e) APPLICATIONS.—Nothing in this section, or the amendments made by this section, shall apply to any application submitted before the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3513 [Log 82628]. ELIGIBILITY OF SHORE POWER PROJECTS UNDER PORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In making port infrastructure development grants under section 54301 of title 46, United States Code, for fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Transportation shall treat a project described in subsection (b) as—

(1) having met the requirements of paragraph (1) and (6)(A)(i) of section 54301(a) of such title; and

(2) being an eligible project under section 5430l(a)(3) of such title.

(b) PROJECT DESCRIBED.—A project described in this subsection is a project to provide shore power at a port that services both of the following:

(1) Passenger vessels described in section 3507(k) of title 46, United States Code.

(2) Vessels that move goods or freight.

Subtitle C—Reports

SEC. 3521 [Log 82362]. REPORT ON USE OF COMMERCIAL CONTRACTING AGENT FOR CREWING AND OPERATION OF MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND VESSELS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than April 1, 2026, the Secretary of the Navy, in consultation with the Administrator of the Maritime Administration, shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the use of a commercial contracting agent for the crewing and operation of military sealift command vessels.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall contain each of the following:

(1) An assessment of whether the crewing and operation of military sealift command vessels through the use of a commercial contracting agent would mitigate the shortage of civilian mariners and increase availability of military sealift command vessels.

(2) Any examples of operations within the Military Sealift Command being carried out through a contract, as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) An identification of potential cost savings associated with the crewing and operation of military

sealift command vessels through the use of a commercial contracting agent.

(4) An identification of specific military sealift command vessels or missions that may be suitable for crewing or operation through the use of a commercial contracting agent.

SEC. 3532 [Log 82630]. CARGOES PROCURED, FURNISHED, OR FINANCED BY UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

Section 55305 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking ''When the United States Government'' and inserting ''Except as provided in subsection (c), when the United States Government'';

(2) by redesignating subsections (c) through (f) as subsections (d) through (g), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

''(c) EXCEPTION.—When the Department of Transportation procures, contracts for, or otherwise obtains for its own account, or provides financing in any way with Federal funds or advances funds or credits, for the furnishing or obtaining of the equipment, materials, or commodities, the Secretary of Transportation or recipient of such financing shall take steps necessary and practicable to ensure that 100 percent of the gross tonnage of the equipment, materials, or commodities (computed separately for dry bulk carriers, dry cargo liners, and tankers) which may be transported on ocean vessels is transported on privately-owned commercial vessels of the United States, as provided under subsection (b), to the extent

such vessels are available at fair and reasonable rates for commercial vessels of the United States, in a manner that will ensure a fair and reasonable participation of commercial vessels of the United States in those cargoes by geographic areas.''.

SEC. 3533 [Log 82626]. TREATMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA MARITIME ACADEMY AS A STATE MARITIME ACADEMY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the requirements of section 51506 of title 46, United States Code, and except as provided in subsection (b), during the two-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall treat the University of Louisiana State Maritime Academy in the same manner as a State maritime academy under chapter 515 of title 46, United States Code.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply after the date on which the University of Louisiana is fully recognized as a State maritime academy under chapter 515 of title 46, United States Code.

DIRECTIVE REPORT LANGUAGE

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DIVISION A—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATIONS

TITLE I—PROCUREMENT

AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT, ARMY

Items of Special Interest

Fixed Wing Requirement

The committee understands Army operational support airlift fixed wing capability is important within the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility. The aircraft provide aerial transport for partner building, personnel and cargo movement, medevac support and other missions in remote and austere areas. The committee directs the Secretary of the Army to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by December 1, 2025. The briefing should include current requirements for Army operational support airlift in remote areas that support transportation for personnel, cargo and casualty evacuation in a contested logistics environment. The brief should also include a plan for recapitalization of current Army fixed-wing aircraft.

OTHER PROCUREMENT, ARMY

Items of Special Interest

Army Watercraft

The committee understands that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently completed a report on Army watercraft. The report has four recommendations for the Secretary of the Army. First, is to develop a mitigation plan addressing challenges to the watercraft fleet, reducing risks, mitigating gaps in capability and capacity to meet current and near-term mission and campaign plan requirements in the Indo-Pacific theater. Second, is to assess the costs and benefits of potential courses of action to improve the ability of Army watercraft to meet current and near-term mission requirements. Third, to ensure the Army

Watercraft Governance Board develops and issues a government framework that reflects GAO's leading practices for effective governance. Fourth, to ensure that the Army Watercraft Governance Board take actions to develop integrated strategies that identify, analyze, and respond to persistent maintenance challenges, including significant and unanticipated maintenance delays, fully capturing maintenance data within Army enterprise-wide system, and ensuring that maintenance manuals are issued in a timely manner. The committee directs the Secretary of the Army to provide a briefing for the House Committee on Armed Services by February 1, 2026, that addresses the Army's implementation plan for the four GAO recommendations.

AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT, NAVY

Items of Special Interest

Propeller Blade Comparison Briefing

The committee understands the propeller retrofit across the legacy Navy and Air Force programs has increased safety, ensuring the most reliable and higher performing propellers across multiple platforms. The committee also understands the Air Force will finish retrofitting the entire C-130H fleet this year with an 8-bladed propeller system, while the C-130J variants currently operates with a 6-bladed propeller system. The committee directs the Secretary of the Navy, in coordination with the Secretary of the Air Force, to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by December 1, 2025, comparing:

(1) the mean time between failure and mean time between removal of 6-bladed propeller and 8-bladed propeller systems;

(2) maintenance costs, both dollars and man-hours, to maintain each propeller system;

(3) quantification of mission aborts due to propeller system issues for both systems; and

(4) any other relevant data or analysis relevant for a comparative analysis.

WEAPONS PROCUREMENT, NAVY

Items of Special Interest

Alternative Manufacturer Qualification for SM-6 Solid Rocket Motors

The committee recognizes the Standard Missile-6 (SM-6) is a versatile, long-range missile that is integral to the United States Navy's air and missile defense capability as well as anti-surface warfare. Despite increasing demand from combatant commanders, production and sustainment of the missile is hampered by supply chain shortfalls for solid rocket motors. The Navy has awarded at least six contracts to validate and mature alternative sources for Mk-72 and Mk-104 rocket motors, but this effort must progress quickly to inform future production decisions.

The committee understands that second source vendors for Mk-72 and Mk-104 rocket motors must be qualified by 2029 to support the increased production rate needed for future demand. Because of the timeline challenges, the committee seeks additional information on Department of the Navy efforts to meet critical demand for the SM-6 by rapidly qualifying alternative sources for Mk-72 and Mk-104 rocket motors. Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to submit a report to the House Committee on Armed Services by March 1, 2026, detailing current efforts to qualify alternative sources. This report should include information on the status of the prototyping contracts, relevant timelines for qualification, transition plans for qualified providers of Mk-72 and Mk-104 rocket motors, and resource requirements to meet planned production schedules.

Ballistic Shielding for Crew Served Weapon Stations

The committee is aware that next-generation ballistic shielding is being fielded for crew served weapons aboard aircraft carriers. These crew served weapons are a critical piece of shipboard force protection systems common across many ship classes in the surface fleet. To better understand requirements for ballistic shielding on crew served weapons and efforts to install this capability across the surface fleet, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by March 1, 2026. This briefing should include information on the requirement for ballistic shielding on crew served weapons, relevant information on current plans for installation on existing ships, as well as design requirements for new ship construction.

SHIPBUILDING AND CONVERSION, NAVY

Items of Special Interest

Auxiliary Oceanographic Research Vessel Procurement

The construction of Navy Global Class research vessels is vital to U.S. Navy research objectives and control of the ocean battlespace. Navy-owned oceanographic research vessels have the unique ability to advance knowledge in Department of Defense relevant disciplines. There is an urgent need to expand research vessel availability, as other nations, particularly China, rapidly expand their own oceanographic research fleets. An overall fleet recapitalization strategy is essential to maintaining a balanced research fleet that meets growing national and scientific demands. From a strategic and national security standpoint, China's rapid expansion of its oceanographic fleet poses challenges to U.S. maritime research leadership. Navy Global Class research vessels play a crucial role in worldwide deep water undersea research, oceanographic observations, and naval operations, directly supporting U.S. national security interests. Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to submit a report to the congressional defense committees by July 1, 2026, on a strategy for the oceanographic research vessel

fleet. The report should include information on sustainment plans for the current oceanographic research vessel fleet, operational requirements for the fleet, and a strategy for future construction plans.

Submarine Safety Program Contracting

The committee notes the importance of the Submarine Safety Program (SUBSAFE), maintained by the Navy, that is a quality assurance program to maintain submarine hull integrity. Work that impacts hull integrity requires SUBSAFE certification for design, material, fabrication, and testing. Further, the committee is concerned, given the current structure of SUBSAFE contract solicitation, that smaller, qualified companies are not able to perform the entire package of work and thus unable to bid on the package. With fewer companies able to bid on packages, the committee notes the risk of overload at shipyards and increased delays in maintenance timelines. The committee believes that there may be benefits to disaggregating SUBSAFE work into smaller task orders to foster increased participation from contractors. Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by March 1st, 2026 on efforts to increase competition for SUBSAFE contracts. This briefing should include information on the scope of work for contract solicitations and efforts to increase participation from small and emerging defense contractors for SUBSAFE work.

OTHER PROCUREMENT, NAVY

Items of Special Interest

Attritable Autonomous Unmanned Surface Vessels

The committee notes that the Department of Defense's use of the term "attritable autonomous unmanned surface vessels (AUSVs)" or "autonomous surface vessels (ASVs)" remains ambiguous. While the classification of AUSVs or ASVs as expendable or attritable may vary depending on operational scenarios, the committee is concerned that the Department is pursuing systems that do not align with the cost-exchange ratio necessary to field unmanned vessels at the scale required for a protracted conflict.

The committee acknowledges the complexity of defining AUSVs or ASVs as expendable or attritable, given the range of sensor and munition configurations these platforms may carry and the situational factors that influence their operational use. However, the committee believes there is value in clarifying how the Department of Defense categorizes its AUSVs and ASVs in terms of attritability.

Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of the Navy, to provide a briefing to the House Committee on

Armed Services not later than March 1, 2026, on how the Department of Defense categorizes AUSVs and ASVs as attritable. This report shall include:

(1) information on how a determination is made regarding "attritable" and what cost criteria are considered for small, medium, and large AUSVs or ASVs; and

(2) an explanation of how these determinations may vary based on payload configurations and mission-specific considerations.

Extra Large Unmanned Underwater Vehicle Transition and Fielding

The committee remains supportive of the Navy's efforts to integrate large diameter and extra large unmanned underwater vehicles (XLUUV) capable of executing high-value missions in contested environments. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118-159) included a provision that requires the U.S. Navy, in coordination with the Commander, United States Indo-Pacific Command, and in consultation with the Director, Defense Innovation Unit, to carry out a competitive demonstration of large and XLUUVs leveraging commercial solutions. The demonstration builds on the open competition directed by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117-263) and held by the U.S. Navy and the Defense Innovation Unit in late 2023. This demonstration culminated in an award of three prototype agreements just months later in early 2024. The committee is pleased to note that the first large diameter unmanned underwater vehicle was delivered to a U.S. Navy operational unit for experimentation in late 2024 as a result of the 2023 competition. The committee is encouraged by the rapid delivery of these capabilities from prototype award to unit experimentation in only two years.

The committee encourages the Secretary of the Navy to continue leveraging commercial solutions to deliver large diameter and XLUUVs with accompanying support equipment, joint command and control (C2) software, and sustainment and support services. The committee recognizes the ability for XLUUVs to integrate a broad array of payloads and sensors and believes that the Secretary of the Navy should expedite the transition of capabilities down selected by the 2025 competition to deliver mission capable XLUUVs for operational testing, user training and fleet integration.

Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by March 1, 2026, on the concept of operation for XLUUVs and how this technology can improve U.S. Navy capabilities.

Multi-Mission Capabilities of Unmanned Surface Vessels for the Navy and Marine Corps

The committee supports the U.S. Navy on their ongoing research, development, test and evaluation of prototypes for multi-mission small unmanned surface vessels (sUSVs). However, the committee is concerned that the requirement is limited to only one mission set.

Current gaps in maritime maneuver may be suitable for sUSVs, including non-kinetic missions in contested maritime environments. Therefore, the committee encourages the U.S. Navy to closely collaborate with the Marine Corps and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to establish and implement multi-mission performance requirements to support the procurement and sustainment of various sUSVs to meet Combatant Command and Fleet challenges.

To better understand plans to address capability gaps and support greater utilization for sUSVs, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to submit a report to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2026. The report shall include:

(1) information on the Navy's progress in defining the common multi-mission operational requirements in partnership with the U.S. Marine Corps and USSOCOM;

(2) the anticipated schedule for the delivery of various small and midsize autonomous vessels to the Combatant Commands and the Fleet;

(3) details on any features that may be incorporated, including open-architecture requirements for components and payloads, including software-agnostic attributes for modularity of advanced sensors and resilient communications; and

(4) identification of common features in the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel and Facilities between the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and USSOCOM to ensure cost savings and shared capability baselines.

Navy Unmanned Maritime Autonomy Architecture and Platform Autonomy

The committee is aware that the Navy is developing autonomy solutions in accordance with Unmanned Maritime Autonomy Architecture (UMAA), using both the government developed Autonomy Baseline (ABL) and dual-use commercial acquisition strategy for its autonomous systems. The Navy UMAA acquisition standard intends to produce an autonomous, artificial intelligence-based command and control system.

The committee encourages the Navy to pursue and prioritize commercially developed autonomy that meets the UMAA requirements, with emphasis on the modularity and interoperability of these systems with defense enterprise mission systems, which includes authorities in section 2377 of title 10, United States Code. The committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than April 1, 2026, on any efforts to utilize section 2377 of title 10, United States Code, for the acquisition of unmanned maritime systems.

Nuclear Propulsion Plant Training

The committee recognizes the critical importance of training our Nuclear Propulsion Operators and believes there may be value in simulated training along

with moored training ships and other current methods. Advances in simulator technology now support full-scale immersive simulators that may provide greater availability and increase student throughput. To better understand the potential benefit of simulated training on nuclear propulsion, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2026. The briefing shall include a feasibility assessment for the development of a nuclear propulsion training facility within the Navy's Center of Excellence for Nuclear Propulsion, information on how simulated training could augment current training capacity, and identification of potential cost savings.

AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT, AIR FORCE

Items of Special Interest

Bomber Bases

The committee is concerned with the number of bombers in the Air Force inventory. The Commander, U.S. Strategic Command has testified to multiple congressional defense committees that buying 100 B-21s will not be enough and that the buy should increase to 145 B-21s. Another concern of the committee are the difficult upgrades to the B-52. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force to provide a briefing for the House Committee on Armed Services by February 1, 2026. The briefing should include a detailed assessment of the status of the B-52 upgrades, the Air Force's backup plan should the B-52 upgrades fail and the feasibility of adding a main operating base four and five to the B-21 laydown.

C-130J Simulator Training

The committee recognizes the strategic value of the C-130J Super Hercules aircraft in enabling rapid global mobility, tactical airlift, and agile combat employment across contested environments. As the Department of Defense prepares for large-scale combat operations with near peer adversaries, the ability of C-130J aircrews to operate effectively in degraded, denied, or austere environments is essential to meeting the demands of the National Defense Strategy. To ensure C-130J pilots maintain peak combat readiness and mission effectiveness, the committee supports the expansion of immersive and scalable virtual training solutions, including the increased use of high-fidelity C-130J simulators. Simulator based training provides cost effective repetition of complex tactical scenarios, mission rehearsals, and joint force integration in a secure environment, while also preserving aircraft availability and reducing operational wear. Additionally, virtual training systems enable distributed and joint exercises with other air, land, and maritime components, improving interoperability and coordination in future contested theaters, particularly the U. S. Indo-Pacific theater. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force to provide a briefing to the House Committee

on Armed Services by March 1, 2026, on the Air Force's plan to expand C-130J virtual and simulator-based training. This briefing shall include:

(1) current delinquencies in currency for C130J pilots;

(2) an assessment of current and projected simulator utilization rates to enhance currency;

(3) the milestones for inclusion of datalink technologies for addressing the connectivity gaps of these assets in training mobility airmen; and

(4) a strategy to increase simulator training integration across total force and allied partner units in preparation for operations in contested environments.

Increasing Bomber Production

The committee understands the B-21A Raider contractor is changing multiple manufacturing processes to potentially increase productivity. The bomber is an important capability and deterrence in the U.S. Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force to provide a briefing for the House Committee on Armed Services by December 1, 2025, updating the committee on the feasibility of increasing B-21A Raider production.

Leveraging Aircraft Autonomy

The committee understands autonomous and remotely-piloted cargo aircraft can provide on-demand airlift capabilities throughout the U.S. Indo-Pacific region which is necessary to deter China. These technologies are advancing through the Federal Aviation Administration certification process enabling the Department of Defense to leverage dual-use aircraft automation. The committee believes that pairing dual use autonomy with commercially available aircraft is an efficient and cost effective method to meet on demand logistics needs in the U.S. Indo-Pacific region. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, to provide a briefing by June 1, 2026. The briefing shall review efforts related to the development of programmatic requirements and resource allocation to rapidly transition commercially available single-engine turboprops, or similar aircraft with dual-use autonomy into operational use by forces within the department.

Oversize Cargo Airlift

The committee is concerned by the Department of Defense's current lack of outsized airlift capability for large, high-volume cargo, including cargo exceeding 300 feet in length, which cannot be readily transported by existing commercial or military airplanes. The committee recognizes the importance of an airlift capability that can provide and supplement existing fixed-wing air cargo capacity for short and unpaved runways to enhance Department of Defense readiness and logistical needs in the Indo-Pacific. The committee recognizes that the development of a large

civilian aircraft that may service defense needs is ongoing and commends the work of the Department of Defense in establishing a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement to evaluate sufficient use cases. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force to submit a report to the House Committee on Armed Services by February 1, 2026 on the feasibility of acquiring outsized airlift service capability. The report shall include, but is not limited to, an assessment of potential airplane platforms capable of transporting cargo exceeding 300 feet in length, an evaluation of the technical, operational, and financial feasibility of acquiring or developing such platforms, identification of any existing or emerging airplane solutions that could achieve U.S. federal civilian airworthiness by the end of 2034.

Procure Commercial Derivative Aircraft

The committee notes the importance of readiness for the nation's military aircraft fleet as well as the importance of finding cost-saving opportunities. The committee also notes that there may be affordable inventory that could be converted at a low cost to ensure aircraft availability for the Department of Defense. Purchasing used commercial aircraft can contribute to significant cost savings while retaining the same safety and reliability standards. The committee directs the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of the Air Force, to submit a report for the House Committee on Armed Services by December 1, 2025, on the feasibility and cost savings of purchasing used commercial aircraft for the Department instead of new aircraft. The report should include a market survey of available aircraft that could be modified for Department of Defense use, the total cost impact and any operational impact of such an action.

Supersonic Aircraft for Airlift Missions

The committee understands that supersonic aircraft technology is maturing. In addition to providing faster travel, supersonic aircraft can provide a long-range transport capability for troop transport, special operations, aeromedical evacuation and critical cargo. Supersonic aircraft development will also drive innovation for aerospace manufacturing, materials science and engine technologies. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by December 1, 2025. The briefing should include potential benefits for future airlift.

TITLE II—RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST, AND EVALUATION

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST, AND EVALUATION, NAVY

Items of Special Interest

Integration of Existing Offensive and Defensive Capabilities on Navy Platforms

The committee is aware of existing capabilities developed for the Department of the Army that may be suitable for integration onto Department of the Navy vessels or platforms. Integration of the PAC-3 interceptor from the Patriot missile defense system with the U.S. Navy's Aegis Weapon System is underway, but further integration of proven systems may provide additional offensive and defensive capabilities to the naval fleet. Programs like the Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) may offer increased capability for small unmanned surface vessels being developed throughout the Department of the Navy. Similarly, the Coyote C-UAS system may offer increased capability to defeat unmanned aircraft system (UAS) threats and preserve more capable interceptors for larger threats to the surface fleet. To better understand how the Navy is considering the utility of proven systems for applications within the Department of the Navy, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2026. The briefing shall include information on current efforts to demonstrate integration of systems including the APKWS and Coyote C-UAS system, how these capabilities might be configured for integration on U.S. Navy vessels or platforms, and any potential capability gaps that could be addressed through proven systems from the Department of the Army.

Unmanned Surface Vessel Testing Areas

The committee supports the Department of the Navy's efforts to develop, test and evaluate autonomous technology prior to acquiring unmanned service vehicles (USVs). However, the committee is concerned that the Department does not have sufficient at-sea test ranges and is further being impeded by unnecessary constraints. Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2026. The briefing shall include the following elements:

(1) an overview of Navy's existing authorities to test or support commercial testing of unmanned maritime technology critical to national security;

(2) an assessment of current access and any constraints to testing unmanned vessels at sea including collision regulations, insurance costs, lookout requirements, and chase boat requirements that could be mitigated in an open ocean unmanned vessel test area;

(3) a cost-benefit analysis of establishing year-round test and experimentation areas at sea;

(4) any precedent for establishing such test areas at sea;

(5) a description of any coordination with the United States Coast Guard for this purpose; and

(6) any immediate actions or recommendations that could be implemented to reduce barriers to testing unmanned vessels.

TITLE X—GENERAL PROVISIONS

ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

OTHER MATTERS

Utilization of "As a Service" Model for Undersea Applications

The committee notes that "as a service" approaches have been successfully implemented in other domains, such as the U.S. Air Force's use of contractor-owned, contractor-operated adversary air training services. These models have demonstrated the ability to provide cost-effective and flexible support to military operations while preserving high-end platforms for their most critical missions.

While this committee remains steadfast in its support for the goal of achieving the steady construction of one Columbia-class and two Virginia-class submarines a year, the committee recognizes the strain on the nuclear submarine fleet due to stagnant force structure levels as well as maintenance and sustainment challenges. To this end, the committee supports the consideration of novel approaches to address training, research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E), as well as other mission needs. The development of a "submarines as a service" model is one potential solution that would incorporate contractor owned, contractor operated, conventionally powered manned submarines into Department of Defense operations and capabilities. Such an approach could provide relief to the nuclear submarine fleet by ensuring that the nuclear fleet be available for high-priority missions while providing the rest of the Department with alternative platforms to support a wide range of mission sets.

Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of Defense to provide a report to the congressional defense committees not later than March 1, 2026, on the potential utilization of the "as a service" model in support of undersea RDT&E, training, operations, and other possible mission areas. This report shall, at a minimum, include the following:

(1) potential uses of contractor owned, contractor operated, conventionally powered manned submarines to meet mission needs across the department for training, RDT&E, and other operational functions;

(2) potential benefits for the utilization of current nuclear-powered submarines for high-priority missions and the operational efficiency of these platforms;

(3) the military services, combatant commands, and other Department of Defense elements that could leverage this capability;

(4) analysis of the statutory, regulatory, and other authorities required to incorporate a "submarines as a service" capability into Department of Defense operations; and

(5) an assessment of the benefits to the U.S. domestic defense and maritime industrial base through domestic production.