

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 18, 2017

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen McCain and Thornberry and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

As you work to complete the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, I am writing to respectfully request the inclusion of funding for three Littoral Combat Ships (LCS).

Funding three LCS in FY18 is required to support the U.S. Navy's Force Structure Assessment, which has been validated by the Department of Defense's Joint Requirements Oversight Council and states that 52 total small surface combatants (LCS and the follow-on Frigate) are needed to successfully execute the Navy's mission. In addition, funding three LCS is required to uphold President Trump's commitments to build a 355-ship Navy, revitalize American manufacturing, strengthen the defense industrial base, and preserve American jobs.

The LCS is a fast, agile, focused-mission platform designed to defeat threats such as mines, quiet diesel submarines and fast surface craft, and capable of operations in near-shore and open-ocean environments. Mission flexibility allows the LCS to perform solo littoral patrol missions, joint operations with allied navies and in high-end threat scenarios as part of a larger networked and distributed battle force. Lethality and survivability upgrades continue to be added while the Program of Record has seen overall enhanced performance, including successful operational deployments, downward cost trends, and improved production schedules. Finally, recent positive reforms to LCS crewing, training, maintenance, and operations have positioned the program for future success.

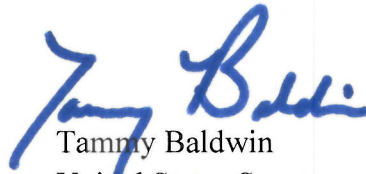
As our Nation looks to increase its naval strength, even the most optimistic future fiscal scenarios will include budget constraints that will drive decisions on the appropriate size and composition of the fleet. The affordable price of the LCS (less than one-third of the cost of a

DDG-51) provides the capacity and capability the Navy needs to support its global mission requirement during a time of limited resources. That critical balance between cost and capability will be needed to achieve the President's goal of a 355-ship fleet and to meet the growing operational demands of our Combatant Commanders to maximize U.S. global presence to reassure allies, deter adversaries, and ensure freedom of navigation and maritime commerce.

In addition to injecting risk into our national security strategy, funding fewer than three LCS would result in layoffs of highly-skilled American manufacturing workers beginning next summer, harming our domestic industrial base. Such an outcome would have dire impacts on the ability of the current LCS shipyards and their supply chains to compete for the forthcoming Frigate, resulting in reduced competition in that acquisition and driving up costs to the taxpayer.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your work on behalf of the men and women of the United States military and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator