

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 14, 2022

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro  
Secretary of the Navy  
Department of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Del Toro:

During your annual force posture hearing in May, we asked about the status of a study you commissioned to analyze the number of amphibious ships needed in our Navy fleet. You told us that the study would be released “in the next several weeks.” It has now been over five months since that hearing, yet the results of the study still have not been provided to either of us.

As you know, our roles on the Senate Armed Services Committee allow us to ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps have the tools needed to fight and win our nation’s wars. The Navy currently plans to decommission over 40 ships in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. As Congress works to fill these gaps and expand our fleet, this study on amphibious ships would provide the Committee with critical context as to the Navy and Marine Corps’ needs.

This is a pivotal moment for the future of the fleet, and there is simply no more time to waste in delivering our Navy and Marine Corps vital platforms. The Chinese PLAN already surpasses our own maritime forces by ship count, and is on track to reach more than 450 ships by the end of the decade.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, our most senior admirals and theater commanders have cited the odds of a Chinese advance on Taiwan sharply increasing by 2027.<sup>2</sup> Amphibious warships are a crucial element of our fleet forces in the Pacific, as they bring unique sea-to-shore capabilities to the fight. Failure to provide and maintain a credible naval deterrent today could mean global catastrophe tomorrow.

We strongly urge you to provide the unredacted, unedited results of the study without further delay. If the study is still incomplete, please provide a reason as to why it is incomplete, whether you need any additional resources to complete the study, and when you expect it to be completed, as well as the results upon completion.

Thank you for your continued service to our nation and for your attention to this matter.



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

<sup>1</sup> <https://news.usni.org/2021/11/03/china-has-worlds-largest-navy-with-355-ships-and-counting-says-pentagon>

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.usni.org/2021/03/09/davidson-china-could-try-to-take-control-of-taiwan-in-next-six-years>