



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman

Katherine W. Dedrick
Staff Director

Sam Graves
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Paul J. Sass
Republican Staff Director

February 24, 2021

Admiral Karl Schultz
Commandant, United States Coast Guard
USCG Headquarters
2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20020

Dear Admiral Schultz:

We are concerned that past Fleet Mix Analyses conducted by the United States Coast Guard (Service, USCG, or Coast Guard) are outdated. As such, those analyses no longer reflect the current global threat environment, the growing mission requirements facing the Coast Guard (particularly those related to the current global threat environment), or the Coast Guard's hard-won operating experience with Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) and National Security Cutters (NSCs).

As the Coast Guard fulfills its requirements under Section 8261, Report on Fast Response Cutters, Offshore Patrol Cutters, and National Security Cutters, of the *Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020* (Division G of P.L. 116-283), we urge you to consider the following operational developments which have created additional demands for USCG cutter assets worldwide:

- U.S. Indo-Pacific Command rotational deployments of multiple NSCs to U.S. Naval Surface Group Western Pacific over the past two years;
- Expanding requirements that justified homeporting three FRCs to Guam;
- Russian Navy exercises that disrupted the U.S. fishing fleet legitimately operating within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone in the Bering Sea;
- Increased deployments to U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility for drug interdiction in support of surge operations announced in April 2020;
- NSC Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing enforcement patrol with the Ecuadorian Navy targeting the massive Chinese distant water fishing fleet operating in or near the Galapagos Islands Exclusive Economic Zone;
- Expanding requirements that justified replacing the six 110' Island Class patrol boats with FRCs in Bahrain;

- Anticipated NSC deployments in support of U.S. 5th Fleet and U.S. 6th Fleet; and
- A recent NSC deployment to South America for IUU fishing enforcement with Brazil & Argentina.

All the operational developments noted above are important for our national defense and security, and all occurred after the release of the last Fleet Mix Analysis which was conducted in 2011.¹ Such new missions have placed additional demands on the Coast Guard, its people, its platforms, and its budgets, none of which are reflected in the 2011 Fleet Mix Analysis.

While there were updates to the Fleet Mix Analyses in 2011 and 2019, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) concluded that even the 91 cutters in the USCG's 2004 Program of Record were not enough to meet Coast Guard mission needs back then.² In fact, that cutter fleet, when fully built out, was only expected to meet 61 percent of envisioned Coast Guard missions.³ As the Coast Guard reports its resultant Fleet Mix requirement numbers, we would like to understand what percentage of missions will be met and, importantly, what it would take to meet 100 percent of the Service's anticipated offshore missions.

Additionally, we would like the Coast Guard to provide answers to the following questions in the Section 8261 report:

1. Which USCG assets are best equipped to deal with peer competition at sea, including organic self-defense capability and interoperability with the U.S. Navy?
2. What additional resources will the USCG need for day-to-day engagement in support of Combatant Commanders?
3. What effect has the increased commitment to provide USCG assets in support of DoD combatant commands across the globe had on domestic mission needs, considering these support operations are only partially funded by DoD? Specifically, provide a summary of assets that have been deployed internationally in support of Combatant Commanders, including an analysis of the types of activities they have been engaged in, and a breakdown of the time those assets spent executing domestic and/or international missions over the past eight years.
4. What are the IUU fishing hot spots (i.e., areas of emphasis) around the world and what additional USCG maritime domain awareness and response resources are needed to address U.S. concerns in these areas?
5. Given the increased presence of Russian and Chinese vessels in the Arctic, is the USCG exploring a mix of assets, including ice-hardened cutters, to execute USCG missions within the U.S. EEZ off the coast of Alaska (i.e., Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Arctic Ocean)? What additional assets are needed to have a robust presence in the Arctic to meet current and future USCG missions?

¹ United States Coast Guard Offshore and Aviation Fleet Mix Analysis Phase 2 Business Case Analysis (May 2011).

² Ronald O'Rourke, CRS, *Coast Guard Cutter Procurement Background and Issues for Congress*, (Dec. 22, 2020), available at <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/R42567?source=search&guid=020cc7e07868470981c77f871d99c1fc&index=0>.

³ *Id.*

6. What is the status of the offshore patrol cutter (OPC) program and what assurances can you provide that the first OPC will be delivered in 2022? What is the current shipbuilder cost (i.e., total contract awards to date) and expected final cost of the first OPC, including non-recurring costs? What is the current shipbuilder cost and expected final cost of the second OPC? How many cutters' years have been lost due to the Department of Homeland Security decision to reset the program in October 2019?

As we continue our oversight of the U.S. Coast Guard and provide for the future fleet, we thank you in advance for your consideration and response to this additional direction as part of the report required by Section 8261 of the *Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020* (Division G of P.L. 116-283), which is due to Congress no later than 90 days after the date of enactment. If you have questions please contact [REDACTED] Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation. [REDACTED]

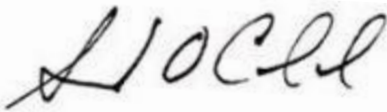
Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio
Chair



Sam Graves
Ranking Member



Salud Carbajal
Chair
Subcommittee on Coast Guard
and Maritime Transportation



Bob Gibbs
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Coast Guard
and Maritime Transportation