

# COAST GUARD OVERSIGHT

---

## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, FISHERIES, CLIMATE  
CHANGE, AND MANUFACTURING

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,  
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

---

OCTOBER 19, 2021

---

Printed for the use of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation



Available online: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

---

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

54-183 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2023

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARIA CANTWELL, Washington, *Chair*

AMY KLOBUCHAR, Minnesota	ROGER WICKER, Mississippi, <i>Ranking</i>
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, Connecticut	JOHN THUNE, South Dakota
BRIAN SCHATZ, Hawaii	ROY BLUNT, Missouri
EDWARD MARKEY, Massachusetts	TED CRUZ, Texas
GARY PETERS, Michigan	DEB FISCHER, Nebraska
TAMMY BALDWIN, Wisconsin	JERRY MORAN, Kansas
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, Illinois	DAN SULLIVAN, Alaska
JON TESTER, Montana	MARSHA BLACKBURN, Tennessee
KYRSTEN SINEMA, Arizona	TODD YOUNG, Indiana
JACKY ROSEN, Nevada	MIKE LEE, Utah
BEN RAY LUJAN, New Mexico	RON JOHNSON, Wisconsin
JOHN HICKENLOOPER, Colorado	SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, West Virginia
RAPHAEL WARNOCK, Georgia	RICK SCOTT, Florida
	CYNTHIA LUMMIS, Wyoming

MELISSA PORTER, *Deputy Staff Director*

GEORGE GREENWELL, *Policy Coordinator and Security Manager*

JOHN KEAST, *Republican Staff Director*

CRYSTAL TULLY, *Republican Deputy Staff Director*

STEVEN WALL, *General Counsel*

---

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, FISHERIES, CLIMATE CHANGE,  
AND MANUFACTURING

TAMMY BALDWIN, Wisconsin, <i>Chair</i>	DAN SULLIVAN, Alaska, <i>Ranking</i>
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, Connecticut	TED CRUZ, Texas
BRIAN SCHATZ, Hawaii	DEB FISCHER, Nebraska
EDWARD MARKEY, Massachusetts	MARSHA BLACKBURN, Tennessee
GARY PETERS, Michigan	RON JOHNSON, Wisconsin
BEN RAY LUJAN, New Mexico	TODD YOUNG, Indiana

## CONTENTS

---

Hearing held on October 19, 2021 .....	Page 1
Statement of Senator Baldwin .....	1
Statement of Senator Sullivan .....	2
Statement of Senator Blumenthal .....	19
Statement of Senator Wicker .....	21
Statement of Senator Cantwell .....	24
Statement of Senator Johnson .....	27
Statement of Senator Duckworth .....	29
Statement of Senator Blackburn .....	38

### WITNESSES

Admiral Karl L. Schultz, Commandant, United States Coast Guard .....	4
Prepared statement .....	6
Master Chief Jason M. Vanderhaden, Master Chief Petty Officer, United States Coast Guard .....	11
Prepared statement .....	13

### APPENDIX

Response to written questions submitted to Karl L. Schultz by:	
Hon. Maria Cantwell .....	41
Hon. Tammy Baldwin .....	48
Hon. Tammy Duckworth .....	49
Hon. Ted Cruz .....	52
Hon. Dan Sullivan .....	54
Hon. Marsha Blackburn .....	55
Hon. Todd Young .....	57
Response to written questions submitted to Jason M. Vanderhaden by:	
Hon. Dan Sullivan .....	58



## COAST GUARD OVERSIGHT

---

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2021**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, FISHERIES, CLIMATE  
CHANGE, AND MANUFACTURING,  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:35 p.m., in room SR-253, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Tammy Baldwin, Chair of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Baldwin [presiding], Cantwell, Blumenthal, Duckworth, Sullivan, Wicker, Blackburn, and Johnson.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TAMMY BALDWIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Senator BALDWIN. I call the Subcommittee to order. And I want to thank you for attending this afternoon's hearing on the Coast Guard. It is an honor to take the time to—in the Oceans and Great Lakes Subcommittee to hold this important hearing. This committee and the Senate are working on a number of important initiatives that impact the Coast Guard, including the Fiscal Year 2022 funding bills, historic investments in American jobs in the infrastructure bill, and protecting against the impacts of climate change through the build back better budget. Finally, work is already underway on drafting the next Coast Guard authorization bill.

The Administration's budget request for the Coast Guard for Fiscal Year 2022 seeks to make significant investments to improve the readiness and capabilities for the Coast Guard and to improve the quality of life for Coast Guard members and their families. Of the \$13.1 billion requested for the Coast Guard, \$1.6 billion is included for procurement, construction, and improvement accounts. I will be interested to hear from you whether this funding level is sufficient to support one of the largest acquisition periods in Coast Guard history, which includes programs like the offshore patrol cutter and the polar security cutter.

Unfortunately, this budget request does not adequately plan or budget for the impacts of climate change, particularly for construction of Coast Guard facilities that have long been underfunded and are in need of replacement due to the effects of climate change. This concern also extends to the fact that the budget does not include funding for an additional Great Lakes icebreaker. Increasing ice breaking capacity on the Great Lakes is critical to facilitating commerce and transportation in winter months, and icebreakers

also play a critical role in preventing flooding, which has been exacerbated by extreme—extremely high water levels, as well as irregular and large ice flows made worse by climate change.

Additionally, I am concerned with the Coast Guard's recent approach on Buy America policies. I am discouraged by the direction the Coast Guard is taking on procuring critical components like engines and shipboard service. Diesel generators on programs like the Polar Security Cutter, and I will be interested to hear how the Coast Guard is considering the health of the American supplier, our industrial base, and the total lifecycle costs associated.

This will continue to be a priority for me as Chair. Finally, while the U.S. Coast Guard has made commendable progress in areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, women make up only 23 percent of the officer corps and only 15 percent of the enlisted workforce. I will be interested to hear in your testimony and answers about the progress made on improving representation of women, as well as racial and ethnic diversity within the Coast Guard. As Chair, I will make it a priority to ensure that we are conducting oversight on all Coast Guard issues from acquisitions like the future Great Lakes icebreaker to personnel issues, including diversity and support for women and families. Accordingly, today's hearing will be a little different.

We will hear testimony from both the Commandant and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Master Chief Vanderhaden. Admiral, thank you for being here today. You are no stranger to this committee. And Master Chief, welcome. I look forward to hearing from you about how Congress can invest in the Coast Guard's most important resource, its people. Thank you for—both for being here today. And with that, I will hand it over to a great advocate for the Coast Guard and great colleague, Ranking Member Sullivan.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA**

Senator SULLIVAN. Well, I want to begin by thanking Chair Baldwin and congratulating you, my colleague, on the chairmanship, and I look forward to working with you again as we have as Chair and Ranking in past Congresses. So, thank you. I think we are off to a great start, and I want to thank our two distinguished witnesses today, the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Gentlemen, welcome and thank you for your service and for the great men and women you are privileged to lead. You know, Congress has given the Coast Guard a wide range of missions from search and rescue, icebreaking, marine environmental protection, port security, drug interdiction, international crisis response, and readiness to support Department of Defense operations. Maritime security and safety issues of National Security are essential to our economic security and our National Security. Global stability is dependent on safe and unfettered access to the maritime domain.

I have great appreciation for the work that you two gentlemen do and that the men and women of the Coast Guard do for this Nation and for my state. During my time as Chair of the Subcommittee in the 116th Congress, we held, I think it was seven

hearings on the work the Coast Guard does day in and day out, so other members of the Senate and the American people could get a better sense of the great work that you and the members of the Coast Guard do for our country. Many of these hearings focused on the Coast Guard's efforts in Alaska.

With more coastline than the rest of the country combined and a large portion of our ocean and fisheries, that discussion in the hearings often focused on the need to expand Coast Guard assets and resources in a region of growing global and international focus, and that is the Arctic. I am pleased to say Congress has made significant progress in this area.

In just the last few years, we have authorized six polar security cutters, the two of which are now fully funded, and we are working to fully fund a third. We have invested over \$513 million for Coast Guard infrastructure in Alaska and continue to fund new classes of vessels, all of which will aid in the Coast Guard's mission, whether in the Great Lakes, in the Arctic, or projecting power across the globe where we need it most.

The Arctic has quickly shifted, I have a couple of slides here, from an area isolated from the rest of the world to what is now clearly referred to as the region of the next great power competition with regard to Russia and China. Both countries are all in on the Arctic. Russia has over 50 icebreakers, while China has—is building their fourth. They claim there are near Arctic nation, whatever the heck that means, because they are not that close to the Arctic.

Russia, in addition to over 50 icebreakers, has opened 16 deep-water ports, 14 airfields, built Arctic military bases, and even formed a new Arctic Northern Command all in the Arctic region. Vladimir Putin has called the Northern Sea Route the next “Suez Canal” in terms of its importance for shipping and has threatened to sink any foreign vessels that do not have a Russian pilot aboard or a Russian escort vessel. We have seen U.S. fishing vessels, legally fishing in our own EEZ, forced out of our own EEZ by armed Russian warships and aircraft.

We have also recently observed three Chinese warships patrolling off our Alaskan coast. Without persistent U.S. presence in the Arctic, we risk leaving an opening for these type of aggressive actions to continue from these two countries in particular. This next graphic depicts the Arctic and shows the two prominent opening sea routes because of the receding sea ice, the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route.

It is an expansive area that is remarkably difficult to operate in, incredibly remote, and while operating, is still often covered in very thick sea ice. The Coast Guard's Arctic strategy states, “the Coast Guard must be able to provide physical presence at will to uphold sovereignty, carry out operational missions, promote freedom of navigation, and fulfill other national and international obligations. I could not agree more. It is foolish to think, however, that the U.S. is currently able to have the ability to operate in the Arctic, particularly when compared to Russia and even China. We don't. And that needs to change.

That said, the Coast Guard is making progress at closing this gap, with the leadership represented here today, with consistent

deployments to the Bering Sea, updates to shore facilities and capabilities in ensuring robust international partnerships in the region.

I was happy to see the success of the HEALY's current transit through the Northwest Passage. These types of deployments demonstrate our ability to operate in the region and our commitment to ensuring a free and open Arctic region. These operations must not only continue, but I believe must increase.

That is one of the reasons why I will soon be introducing legislation to increase the influence and capabilities of our United States Coast Guard in the Arctic through persistent presence in that critical region. Without further investment in our polar capabilities and without continuous U.S. presence in the Arctic, our adversaries' influence will grow. If their influence is allowed to continue unchecked.

We risk the ability to protect our vessels, U.S. vessels, conducting commerce, conducting fisheries activities, enforcing international law, and therefore we need the Coast Guard more than ever.

I want to thank our witnesses again for participating in this hearing today and thank the Chair for her leadership on calling this important hearing. Thank you.

Senator BALDWIN. Well, thank you, Ranking Member Sullivan. We will now turn to our witnesses for their opening testimony. We will start with Admiral Schultz, and then I will call upon Master Chief Vanderhaden. We will include your full testimony in the Committee's record, so please try to keep your remarks to 5 minutes in length.

**STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL KARL L. SCHULTZ, COMMANDANT,  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Admiral SCHULTZ. Well, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Sullivan, and it is an honor for the Master Chief and I to appear before you today, and before two great supporters and advocates for the men and women of the United States Coast Guard in the missions we do across the globe and across the Nation.

United States Coast Guard remains keenly focused on the three strategic priorities or lines of effort mapped out in our 2018 to 2022 strategic plan. And those are first, maximizing readiness today and tomorrow, addressing the Nation's complex maritime challenges, and delivering mission excellence anytime, anywhere. Let me start by thanking the Committee for your enduring support of the U.S. Coast Guard and our efforts to tackle these strategic priorities.

The Fiscal Year 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act helped sustain critical momentum to address service readiness, specifically noting attention to Coast Guard surface and aviation fleet recapitalization, the injection of much needed funding to improve our aging shore infrastructure and information technology, and essential investments in our Coast Guard workforce.

Building off this momentum, the Fiscal Year 2022 President's budget request reflects the same readiness priorities as we look to provide our workforce with the capable assets, the resilient infrastructure, and modern systems they need to conduct operations and meet both current and future mission demands.

To close the Coast Guard readiness gap, we need sustained operations and support budget growth of about 3 to 5 percent on an annual basis. With your support, we continue to build the Nation's first new heavy polar icebreakers in nearly half a century.

Completing the Polar Security Program of record will provide the global reach in the ice breaking capability necessary to ensure sustained operations in the polar or the high latitude regions. The polar security cutters will enable the United States to project sovereignty, protect natural marine resources, counter malign actors, and respond to new mission demands caused by receding ice. Continued progress on the offshore patrol cutter program is vital, as these cutters will replace our legacy fleet of 210 and 270 medium endurance cutters, which have served with distinction but so for many decades.

Yet, they are becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and require extraordinary efforts by our personnel. Despite these Herculean maintenance efforts, this fleet of medium endurance cutters has lost roughly 11 percent of its operational capacity over the past 2 years, and that is a degradation of the front line mission performance. I am increasingly concerned about our ability to sustain operations with our legacy rotary wing, MH-65 and MH-60 helicopters, as 65 Dolphin parts are increasingly hard to locate. And so the Coast Guard must immediately transition toward an all MH-60 Jayhawk fleet.

To meet today's standards for both energy efficiency and resilience, we must update our shore facilities. The Fiscal Year 2021 appropriation provided substantial support here, and the 2022 budget request makes continued investments in this important infrastructure. The Coast Guard must also keep pace with the industry's technological advances, particularly those confronting the marine transportation system, a key economic engine for our Nation that generates \$5.6 trillion of annual economic activity and supports more than 30 million jobs. We must ensure the MTS's safety, security, and its reliability.

Today, our service remains at an inflection point with respect to service readiness. Modern assets, facilities, and technology will help close our readiness gap, enable our workforce of 54,000 active, reserve, and civilian members to focus their efforts on operations in the solving of complex problems to deliver mission performance.

On top of the day to day operations across our large mission portfolio, the Coast Guard is increasingly called upon to respond to significant incidents, accidents, contingency events, and new mission demands created by climate change that have major impacts on our Nation.

Between the year 2015 and 2020, the Coast Guard search personnel and assets responded to 12 major hurricanes as Category 3 or larger and numerous other tropical storms impacting the homeland. Wildfires in Oregon and California, flooding in the heartland, emergency at the Southwest border, and support to operation allies welcome, not to mention support to the Bahamas in 2019 for Hurricane Dorian, and this past summer's earthquake on the South Coast of Haiti.

Our complex operating environment and challenging missions makes it critical that we harness the full power of the background,

experience, and imagination of every member of our Coast Guard workforce. Myself and senior leaders across the organization remain fully committed to fostering an environment that provides an inclusive and rewarding journey for all Coast Guardsmen, in our quest to be a service increasingly reflective of the American public we are honored to serve.

We must position ourselves to be an employer choice in a highly competitive marketplace for talent. I could not be prouder of your Coast Guard men and women executing their multi-mission responsibilities both at home and abroad, particularly against the backdrop of the ongoing global pandemic. They stood the watch with both peak professionalism and unmatched resilience, and with your continued support, we will remain Semper Paradis, always ready. Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Schultz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL KARL L. SCHULTZ, COMMANDANT,  
U.S. COAST GUARD

### Introduction

Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Sullivan, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and thank you for your enduring support of the United States Coast Guard. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act sustains critical momentum for Coast Guard surface and aviation fleet recapitalization, injects much needed funding to improve our aging shore and information technology infrastructure, and makes essential investments in our workforce. Today, I look forward to addressing how the Administration's FY 2022 budget request provides a favorable trackline for the Coast Guard our Nation needs.

Amidst the unique challenges presented by the global pandemic these past 16 months, your Coast Guard continued to answer the call and deliver mission excellence. Coast Guard forces responded to new threats in the cyber domain, interdicted 130 foreign vessels engaged in illegal fishing in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, conducted 16,000 search and rescue cases, and responded to the most active Atlantic Basin hurricane season on record with 30 named storms, 12 making landfall in the contiguous United States, six at hurricane strength.

This year, for the first time in nearly 40 years, the Coast Guard's sole heavy icebreaker—the 44-year-old POLAR STAR—deployed to the Arctic in the winter, overcoming treacherous environmental conditions and engineering casualties to advance America's sovereign interests and conduct vital scientific research. Coast Guard cutters on patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Basin interdicted 158 metric tons of illegal narcotics worth \$5.6 billion, reducing Transnational Criminal Organizations' illicit profits, as well as helping to attenuate the “push factors” that trigger migration and fuel violence and instability across Central America. National Security Cutters (NSCs) STONE, BERTHOLF and KIMBALL, and Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) OLIVER BERRY and JOSEPH GERCZAK worked with strategic partners in Oceania and Latin America to combat the threat of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. IUU fishing creates ecological damage to the marine environment, jeopardizes food access and sustainable fisheries, threatens the economies of fragile coastal states, and undermines the global maritime rules-based international order. This spring, two of the Service's newest FRCs, CHARLES MOULTHROPE and ROBERT GOLDMAN, made a trans-Atlantic voyage to their new homeport in Manama, Bahrain. En route, the FRCs conducted strategic engagements in Rota, Spain; Tunis, Tunisia; and the Port of Piraeus, Greece, bolstering regional cooperation.

These vessels replace two of the Service's six legacy 110-foot patrol boats stationed at Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, where they provide support to U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet operations in the Arabian Gulf. The Coast Guard also served at the forefront of strategically important multi-lateral venues, such as the operationally focused Arctic Coast Guard Forum and the highly effective North Pacific Coast Guard Forum, promoting dialogue across shared areas of common interest with the seven other Arctic nations, as well as North Pacific fisheries partners—Canada, Japan, Russia, China, and South Korea.

*Maritime security is national security*, and across the globe the Coast Guard is in high demand as an instrument of international diplomacy. Oftentimes viewed as the U.S. maritime service with the most relatable mission profile to many nations' maritime forces, the U.S. Coast Guard is often replicated and considered to be a tremendous partner to our like-minded friends and allies.

I am extraordinarily proud of our workforce and remain humbled to serve as their Service Chief. I would contend that it is a transformational time for our Service as we become a true 21st century Coast Guard—one that stands ready to operate in an increasingly complex, inter-connected, and technologically sophisticated maritime domain. This transformation hinges on sustained momentum to restore readiness and continued strategic investments in the Coast Guard the Nation is calling for. With the support of both Congress and the Administration, we will continue to recruit, train, and retain a new generation of Americans who better reflect the demographics of the public we serve; we will recapitalize our surface and aviation assets; we will revitalize our aging shore infrastructure; and we will invest in modern technologies. The FY 2022 President's Budget request is a direct reflection of those priorities.

### **Restore Readiness**

*Support the Mission Ready Total Workforce:* At the core of our mission success resides extraordinary people—the world's most capable and talented Coast Guard comprised of over 56,000 Active Duty, Reserve, and Civilian personnel, supported by 25,000 Auxiliary volunteers. The Coast Guard entrusts and empowers its personnel at every level to lead with a bias for action—taking on-scene initiative and delivering solutions to complex problems. While extremely valuable in executing the Service's missions, these traits may also serve to veil the true impacts of the Coast Guard's readiness challenges. As Coast Guard men and women take it upon themselves to accomplish the mission, the thousands of added hours required to overcome asset, technology, and infrastructure readiness issues drive workforce fatigue, and can often come at the expense of training and critical skills retention.

Going forward, I remain committed to providing our dedicated and talented workforce with the tools, resources, and policies that will enable them to professionally thrive and personally grow. Our FY 2022 budget requests \$170 million for pay and benefits; and \$44 million to address workforce gaps, to modernize the Service's antiquated training system, to enhance recruiting and retention initiatives, to expand diversity and inclusion efforts, and to continue the transition to electronic health records. This funding is vital to continue the progress we are making due in no small part to your support in the FY 2021 appropriation. This year we have continued the critically important transition to electronic health records, bolstered our childcare subsidy program, accelerated the modernization of our training system, invested in critical course development, hired additional recruiters, increased resources to support workforce mental health needs, and made substantial investments in family housing projects in Kodiak, Alaska and Staten Island, New York.

As the Coast Guard brings new assets online, it becomes increasingly critical that we remain focused on our personnel. The FY 2022 budget allows the Coast Guard to continue to pursue policies and practices that enable the Service to recruit and retain a highly talented workforce increasingly representative of the American public we serve. I remain committed to creating an environment that attracts the best of our Nation's diverse talent and experience, and provides an inclusive and rewarding journey that positions the Coast Guard as an employer of choice in a highly competitive marketplace for talent. The budget we will discuss today highlights that commitment.

*Modernize and Sustain Operational Capability:* The Coast Guard is in the midst of the largest recapitalization effort in our history. Until the work to recapitalize is fully completed, service members must continue to conduct missions with legacy assets, many of which are over 50 years old, like our Reliance Class 210-foot medium endurance cutters and our construction and inland waterways tenders. The Service must also sustain our legacy fleet until new assets come online. This recapitalization and sustainment balance is not only applicable to our surface and aviation assets, but also for our shoreside and waterfront infrastructure, where every mission begins. With the support of Congress, we have seen significant increases to our shore recapitalization funding in recent years; however, our ten-year average recapitalization rate is at only 0.4 percent. A healthy organization recapitalizes its infrastructure at a rate of 2 to 4 percent. Our current pace equates to full replacement of the Coast Guard's shore plant every 267 years.

### Surface Assets

With the strong support of the Administration and Congress, we continue efforts to acquire the Nation's first new heavy polar icebreakers in almost half a century. The \$555 million provided in the FY 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act funds construction of the second Polar Security Cutter. The FY 2022 request of \$170 million will sustain the program and procure initial long lead time materials for the third. When fully operational, these Polar Security Cutters will provide the global reach and icebreaking capability necessary to ensure sustained operations in the Polar or High Latitude Regions, access which is critical to projecting U.S. sovereignty and protecting our national interests, countering malign actors, and responding to new mission demands created by climate change.

The FY 2021 Coast Guard appropriation included \$546 million for the Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC), one of the Service's highest acquisition priorities. Continued progress on the OPC program is absolutely vital to recapitalizing the capability provided by our legacy fleet of 210-foot and 270-foot Medium Endurance Cutters (MECs). The FY 2022 request provides \$597 million for construction of the fourth OPC and long lead time materials for the fifth. The OPC program is for 25 hulls. The legacy assets the OPCs will replace have been workhorses for over 50 years and have served the Nation with distinction, but the MEC fleet is becoming more difficult and expensive to maintain, and we continue to see increasing degradation in its operational availability. Despite the extraordinary efforts of our men and women, over the last two years alone, our MEC fleet has lost nearly 500 annual patrol days due to unplanned maintenance and repairs, the equivalent of 11 percent of our MEC fleet capacity. To address this critical loss of operational capacity, the FY 2022 President's Budget requests \$60 million for additional shore-side support personnel and funding to improve vessel readiness across the Coast Guard's surface fleet due to deferred maintenance, reduced dry docks and dockside availabilities, and rising costs for parts and services.

We are also making progress on the recapitalization of our fleet of inland tenders—some of which have been in service since the 1940s, shouldering the herculean responsibility of maintaining both fixed and floating aids to navigation on the U.S. Marine Transportation System (MTS)—the 25,000 miles of rivers and navigable channels that support \$5.4 trillion in annual commerce and 31 million jobs. The MTS is the lifeblood of the U.S. economy, supporting 26 percent of our Nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The FY 2022 request for \$67 million would allow the Coast Guard to award a detail design and construction contract, with delivery of the first Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC) anticipated in FY 2024, maintaining momentum from the \$25 million provided in the FY 2021 appropriation. These cutters—which will replace our legacy inland tender fleet—will feature modern designs for propulsion and crew habitability, as well as enable gender equity in this segment of our cutter forces community for the first time in history.

### Aviation Assets

Like my concerns with our aging surface assets, I have become increasingly concerned about our ability to sustain operations with our legacy rotary wing fleet. Our current fleet includes 98 MH-65 Dolphin and 48 MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters. Both helicopters are undergoing essential Service Life Extension Programs (SLEP) to push current capabilities into the mid-2030s. However, the rapidly declining availability of MH-65 parts is revealing that SLEP alone will no longer ensure MH-65 readiness that far into the future. Even if a healthy supply chain existed, the MH-65 fleet will exceed its service life well before 2040 and the expected arrival of Future Vertical Lift capability. Conversely, DoD operates more than 4,000 H-60s and is poised to continue H-60 operations until Future Vertical Lift technology is fully deployed. Combined with the rapid growth in use of the H-60 variant in the civil aviation sector, the domestic H-60 supply chain will remain viable well past 2040. Hence, while completion of the MH-65 and MH-60 SLEP remains an imperative to meeting current mission demand, *the Coast Guard must immediately begin transitioning towards a single airframe rotary wing fleet comprised of MH-60 helicopters.* The FY 2021 appropriation contained \$29 million to enable the Service to convert Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico, a critical first step towards that transition.

The FY 2022 request proposes \$83 million to expand the Coast Guard's fleet of MH-60T helicopters with the conversion of low hour former Navy air frames at our Aviation Logistics Center. The request also supports the transition of Air Station New Orleans, Louisiana from MH-65 to MH-60 helicopters using aircraft currently in the Coast Guard's inventory. Lastly, to address broader aviation readiness concerns and improve the operational availability of both our fixed and rotary wing aircraft, the FY 2022 request includes \$97 million to help arrest the growth of aviation

maintenance backlogs, rebuild critical parts inventories, and enable avionics upgrades that ensure asset airworthiness.

#### *Shore Infrastructure*

I am also particularly mindful of the condition of our aging shore infrastructure and the adverse effects it has on readiness across all mission areas. We greatly appreciate the \$363 million provided by Congress in FY 2021 to support critical shore facility investments in Alaska, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Washington. While these investments enhance the resilience of our infrastructure portfolio, we still have more work to do as our facilities face new threats from natural hazards and the impacts of climate change. Sustaining this momentum going forward is essential to providing our Coast Guard men and women with the modern facilities necessary to support 21st century Coast Guard operations.

The Coast Guard has been slowly recapitalizing our shore infrastructure, updating and where possible replacing legacy military housing and support facilities, and modernizing waterfront facilities to accept new assets. Despite these efforts, the Service has a \$2 billion infrastructure recapitalization backlog. Additionally, we have accrued nearly \$1 billion in deferred, depot-level maintenance projects on our shore facilities. The FY 2022 budget supports the Coast Guard's efforts to address the \$1 billion deferred shore facility depot maintenance backlog with targeted investments to improve the condition and energy efficiency of shore facilities, and expedite the divestiture of excess real property.

*Improve Information Technology Reliability:* We are now a year into our "Technology Revolution"—a "Whole of Service" effort to ensure that our dedicated workforce is supported by a reliable, mobile, and integrated information system. With your support in the 2020 Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Coast Guard was able to make over \$85 million in investments towards crucial modernization efforts, from hardware and network upgrades that facilitated remote work and telehealth capabilities, to modern data analytics tools whose versatility helped Coast Guard leaders mitigate the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with accurate and up-to-date personnel protective equipment and vaccine tracking and distribution information. Furthermore, with the more than \$100 million provided in the FY 2021 appropriation towards our "Technology Revolution," we continue investments in software modernization and network defense, replacement of obsolete hardware, enhanced connectivity aboard our cutters, and we will begin the transition to an enterprise big data platform to better inform future operations and enhance our already stellar mission effectiveness.

To stay ready, the Coast Guard must keep pace with the technological advances occurring across the maritime sphere, from the cyber domain to renewable energy, and increased space operations, in order to ensure a safe and secure Marine Transportation System. The FY 2022 budget request continues to make critical investments in the Coast Guard's network, hardware, and software—including \$17 million to increase cyber hardening and improve the reliability and integrity of Coast Guard information technology networks; \$54 million to address infrastructure shortfalls and communications equipment obsolescence, as well as build resilient network delivery architecture that ensures no single point of failure; and \$22 million to transition to modern software and provide mobile tools that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operators in the field. To have a truly 21st Century Coast Guard, we must build off the momentum of previous Congressional support and accelerate our efforts.

#### **Conclusion**

The Coast Guard is America's maritime first responder and must be prepared for natural and manmade disasters, while also conducting an array of steady state missions that enhance economic prosperity, safeguard our environment, and advance the security of our homeland and broader national security interests. New assets alone are insufficient to sustain a mission-ready Coast Guard. A ready Coast Guard requires operational platforms, reliable infrastructure, and above all else, a well-trained and diverse workforce properly equipped with state-of-the-market technology to enable mission performance.

With the continued support of the Administration and Congress, your Coast Guard will live up to our motto—*Semper Paratus*—Always Ready. Thank you for your enduring support of the men and women of the Coast Guard.

## FY 2022 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

**BUDGET PRIORITIES:**

- **Restore Readiness**—The Coast Guard must maintain momentum to restore Service readiness. More than ever, the Nation needs a ready Coast Guard with the tools and support systems necessary to operate in the increasingly complex, interconnected, and technologically advanced maritime domain.
- **Recapitalize Legacy Assets and Infrastructure**—The Coast Guard is in the midst of the largest recapitalization effort in its history—an effort critical to building the Coast Guard the Nation needs. However, until recapitalization is fully completed, service members must continue to conduct missions with legacy assets, some of which are over 50 years old.

The FY 2022 Budget requests *\$9.02 billion* for Operations and Support (O&S) and *\$1.64 billion* for Procurement, Construction and Improvements (PC&I). Budget highlights include:

**RESTORE READINESS (O&S):***Support the Mission Ready Total Workforce*

- *\$127 million* for requisite military pay and allowances per National Defense Authorization Act requirements, maintaining parity with the military branches within the Department of Defense, and *\$43 million* for civilian pay and benefits (O&S).
- *\$44 million* for workforce readiness, including recruiting, retention, diversity and inclusion, training, and healthcare (O&S).

*Modernize and Sustain Operational Capability*

- *\$194 million* to address Coast Guard depot maintenance backlogs, including: *\$97 million* for fixed and rotary-wing aircraft maintenance and critical parts; *\$60 million* for vessel deferred maintenance and shore-side support personnel; and *\$37 million* for shore infrastructure depot maintenance backlogs and divestiture of excess real property.
- *\$93 million* for new assets including: operations and maintenance (O&M) funds for Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) #47–51 and OPC #1; crews for FRCs #49–54, OPC #2, and NSC #10; shoreside personnel and support for FRCs #48–53 and OPC #1; support for NSC capabilities, including tactical cryptology and small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS); crew and O&M for three HC–130Js; O&M for a new C–37 Long Range Command and Control Aircraft; and funds to operate and maintain new and improved facilities at Air Station Ventura, California; the first OPC homeport in San Pedro, California; a new aircraft simulator building at Aviation Training Center Mobile, Alabama; and family housing in Perry, Maine.
- *\$23 million* to transition Air Station New Orleans, Louisiana from MH–65 to MH–60 helicopters and crew and O&M of MH–60T hull #49 to continue the Coast Guard's efforts to transition to a single-frame helicopter fleet.

*Improve C5I Reliability and Performance*

- *\$54 million* to address critical shortfalls in the Coast Guard's IT hardware and infrastructure.
- *\$22 million* to transition to modern software and provide mobile solutions for the workforce.
- *\$17 million* for improved cyber hardening to ensure resilience, reliability, and integrity of Coast Guard IT networks.

**RECAPITALIZE LEGACY ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE (PC&I):**

- *\$1 billion* for vessels, including: *\$597 million* for the construction of OPC #4, as well as long lead time materials for OPC #5; *\$170 million* for PSC including project management for the construction of PSCs #1–2 and initial long lead time materials for PSC #3; *\$78 million* for post-delivery activities for National Security Cutters (NSCs) #10–11; and *\$67 million* for the Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC) initial detail design and construction contract award.
- *\$280 million* for shore infrastructure improvements to support new acquisitions and the execution of Coast Guard operations including: PSC homeport in Seattle, Washington; recruit barracks at Training Center Cape May, New Jersey; continued buildout of the consolidated operational base in Charleston, South Carolina; and other infrastructure repairs and upgrades.

- \$222 million to recapitalize and sustain fixed and rotary-wing aircraft including: sustainment of the current MH-60T helicopter fleet and initial funding for fleet expansion; modernization and sustainment of MH-65 helicopters to extend service life into the 2030s; and continued missionization of HC-27J medium-range surveillance aircraft.

Senator BALDWIN. And now, Master Chief Vanderhaden.

**STATEMENT OF MASTER CHIEF JASON M. VANDERHADEN,  
MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER, UNITED STATES COAST  
GUARD**

Chief VANDERHADEN. Thank you, Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Sullivan, Ranking Member Wicker. Thank you. Just coincidentally, my last two trips were to Alaska and to Wisconsin, so I feel like I—it is good to sit in front of you—yes.

[Laughter.]

Chief VANDERHADEN. I want to join Admiral Schultz and extending my utmost gratitude on behalf of the men and women of the Coast Guard for your enduring support of our efforts to restore service readiness. We are an armed force of the United States and the Nation's lead maritime enforcement agency, and we are a maritime safety and regulatory agency.

The men and women that I represent today truly make up the finest Coast Guard in the world. Our dedicated Coast Guard members are on the front lines every day, carrying out operations globally and protecting our Homeland's maritime domain from constantly evolving threats. Your support ensures they can focus each day on those difficult missions with the full knowledge that their housing, health, and family are well taken care of.

I am extremely proud of the entire Coast Guard workforce and their ability to persevere through the COVID-19 pandemic and the myriad of challenges we face as a Nation. As I travel around the country and speak with the troops, our morale is high. Our dedicated workforce understands the importance of their service to their Nation and the challenges we must overcome. The current challenge I am most concerned about is our ability to recruit and retain the workforce needed to operate our cutters and boats and aircraft.

As we replace our aging assets, the new cutters, helicopters, and planes being built require us to grow our workforce now so that we are prepared to operate and maintain these technologically advanced resources when they arrive. Although today we enjoy the highest retention rate of all the military services, we will need to retain the future workforce at an even higher rate to meet the increasing demand both domestically and abroad.

Coast Guard leadership is taking a proactive approach to implement—to improving our retention by analyzing, evaluating, and mitigating the causes that may lead members to leave our service early. We have contracted with outside agencies for several studies to provide the Coast Guard with recommendations to remove retention barriers and to provide a better quality of life for all our members. Based on these recommendations, we implemented several workforce initiatives, including adjusting assignment policies to facilitate the co-location of dual military families and modernizing

the body composition program to adopt a compliance method similar to what the Air Force and the Navy are using.

We also updated our parental leave policy to allow for 120 days of leave for a primary—any primary caregiver and created a program where Coast Guard reservists can be called active duty to backfill members when they go on prenatal, maternity, convalescent, and primary caregiver leave. These updates definitely enhance the quality of life for our members while maintaining our high standards of readiness.

Policy changes are just one avenue to improve retention, but policy change alone is not enough to retain our best and brightest. We developed an action plan to reinforce the importance of inclusive leadership at all levels, especially leadership by example, and we started at the top the top of our enlisted workforce to demonstrate our commitment to good leadership.

We completely changed our advancement process to Master Chief Petty Officer, and this new process includes a panel that conducts a thorough review of our members' records, with an emphasis on selecting proven leaders who exemplify our core values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty. We have also stepped up our leadership game by expanding the availability of mentoring. Our Office of Leadership recently launched a new mobile enabled mentoring program to connect mentors of mentees through traditional one on one mentoring on a global basis. This industry proven app-based mentoring program provides flexibility to people searching for a mentor.

This technology enables mentors from across the service to connect with—mentees from across the service to connect with mentors of their choosing and gain valuable advice and insight to better manage their careers. I recently spoke to the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Chief JoAnne Bass, and the Air Force is evaluating the use of the same mentoring program.

Not often the Air Force copies the Coast Guard, but I think we hit a home run with this one. As we build the Coast Guard workforce of the future, we recognize the importance—the important imperative to be an employer of choice that reflects the public we serve.

This summer, the Rand Corporation finalized a study to identify barriers and recruitment retention of underrepresented racial, ethnic, and general minorities in the active duty workforce.

We are already implementing initiatives to ensure members from underrepresented minority groups can thrive and our senior enlisted leaders are excited to roll out these vital improvements.

Your Coast Guard is hard at work to attract a talented and diverse workforce, and I appreciate this committee's commitment to create a Coast Guard ready to protect and defend America's maritime domain. Thank you for inviting me to testify today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Chief Vanderhaden follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JASON M. VANDERHADEN, MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER,  
U.S. COAST GUARD

### **Introduction**

Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Sullivan, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and echo the Commandant's appreciation for your enduring support of the United States Coast Guard. This is likely my final appearance before you due to my impending retirement from the Coast Guard after 34 years of service, and I would like to personally thank each of you for your efforts on behalf of our workforce. Throughout my career I have been fortunate to serve alongside some of the most capable and dedicated men and women in the U.S. Government, and I am thankful for the privilege to discuss their needs with you today.

The Coast Guard is America's oldest continuous seagoing service. We are one of the six Armed Forces, and the only one located within the Department of Homeland Security. We are responsible for the safety and security of the Nation's maritime domain. The Coast Guard's day-to-day operations include saving lives of those in peril at sea, enforcing maritime law, protecting the environment, and defending the Nation at home and abroad alongside the other Armed Forces. In the last 19 months, however, we have added the complexity of the COVID-19 pandemic to these demanding missions.

I am extremely proud of our workforce and humbled to serve as their Senior Enlisted Leader through these especially trying times. Over the first nine months of this year, the Coast Guard responded to more than 12,500 search and rescue cases resulting in 3,755 lives saved; removed 111,000 kegs of cocaine, 40,000 lbs of marijuana, and detained 430 suspected smugglers during at sea drug interdictions; interdicted 2,600 migrants at sea; and responded to 8,500 pollution incident reports, mitigating the impacts of 85,000 gallons of oil and 14,000 gallons of hazardous substances discharged within the coastal zone. All of those missions were executed in demanding, oftentimes harrowing conditions. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, *"a smooth sea never made a skilled sailor."* Your "Always Ready" Coast Guard lives this each day. Across the heartland, in the ports, on the seas, throughout cyberspace, and around the globe, we are the world's premier maritime Service, positioned to protect and ready to rescue.

### **Restoring Readiness**

We are committed to ensuring that our workforce is prepared now and in the future. Our people deserve operational assets that are equipped to meet twenty-first century standards and requirements. However, updated assets alone cannot overcome the readiness challenges we face. In my 34 years of service, I have been astounded by the wealth of character present at every level of our organization. Powerful traits like devotion to duty, bias for action, and on-scene initiative are cultivated at each level of the chain of command. These traits serve our "always ready" mentality and are integral to our international reputation as the world's greatest Coast Guard. But when resources are lean, the same bias for action and devotion to duty can place the strain of mission execution on the backs of our people. Countless times I have witnessed our dedicated workforce sacrifice their well-being, health, and home-life to ensure mission success.

That is why we must furnish our talented workforce with the tools, resources, and policies that enable them to carry out their diverse and dangerous missions. The President's FY 2022 budget requests increases of \$170 million for pay and benefits as well as \$44 million to address workforce gaps that will modernize the Service's antiquated training system, enhance recruiting and retention initiatives, expand diversity and inclusion efforts, and continue the transition to electronic health records. The FY 2021 appropriation enabled us to begin these updates, and the FY 2022 budget builds upon that support to address workforce mental health needs, hire additional recruiters, strengthen our childcare subsidy program, and invest in distance learning course development while accelerating the modernization of our training system.

### **Recruiting a Diverse Workforce**

As with the other Armed Services, the COVID-19 pandemic hampered our efforts to meet recruiting goals. By the end of FY 2021, the enlisted active duty workforce will be approximately 900 personnel below target strength compared to our Personnel Allowance List. Our FY 2021 Enlisted Training and Accession Plan called for an Active Duty Enlisted accession of 4,000. Demonstrating remarkable resolve and resourcefulness, Coast Guard recruiting command was able to add 3,200 new recruits in FY 2021, but reducing the gap of nearly 800 new recruits is a top Service

priority to resolve in FY 2022. To that end, we have made great investments in recruiting, amounting to \$10 million over the last two years, and launched a mobile recruiting app, tailor-made to engage the next generation of Coast Guard leaders. The FY 2022 President's budget includes \$2.7 million to license, host, and support this app.

We are making a sustained effort meet our overall recruiting targets but are also focused on increasing the percentage of female and underrepresented minorities (URM) entering the Service to meet our diversity and inclusion goals. Over 17 percent of our active duty accessions were women and 35 percent of our active duty accessions were from diverse communities in FY 2021. We are making progress, but this mission is not complete.

Last year, we convened a study with the RAND Corporation to identify barriers in recruitment and retention of underrepresented racial, ethnic, and gender minorities in the active-duty Coast Guard. I am happy to report that the URM study was delivered in August, and we have started to implement policy changes based on its findings and recommendations. In an effort to recruit diverse future leaders, we have assigned new recruiters in Washington, D.C., Hampton Roads, Atlanta, Miami, and New Orleans.

We look forward to implementing these and many more initiatives to ensure members from URM groups can thrive in the United States Coast Guard.

#### **Retaining our Diverse Workforce**

In order to remain a premier maritime Service and an employer of choice, we must be the world's most inclusive and increasingly diverse Coast Guard. A Coast Guard where every member can contribute the full power of their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and thoughts. Anything less, and we will fail to garner the talent, innovation, creativity, and performance necessary to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and technically sophisticated maritime operating environment.

The previously mentioned URM study also indicated access to mentors is important. In response, our Office of Leadership launched a new "mobile enabled" mentoring program to better connect mentors with mentees through traditional "one-on-one" mentoring. The "app based" mentoring program allows flexibility to foster inclusion and connection within and across our many Coast Guard communities.

Another essential element of our approach to achieve the highest levels of recruitment, retention, and mentorship, is our robust partnership with affinity groups. These diverse groups provide support for individuals entering the service through Coast Guard recruitment programs. Overall, affinity groups enrich the personal and professional development of all Coast Guard employees by fostering an inclusive community that values the rich diversity of the United States. We recently updated our affinity group policy, and I am impressed at how these groups are providing real solutions that increase recruiting and retention of a more diverse Coast Guard.

#### **Housing**

Housing remains a major issue for our military members and their families, and the historically challenging economy we face today places extra stress on our workforce. We are grateful for your continued support of annual basic allowance for housing (BAH) review. Adequate BAH permits our members and their loved ones to obtain housing on the local economy, which in turn reduces the need for Coast Guard owned and leased housing. We also appreciate the flexibility granted by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 that allows the Service to reinvest funds deposited in the Coast Guard's Housing Fund from the sale of excess property back into military family and unaccompanied personnel housing. With the funds deposited in FY 2021 we have identified 14 projects throughout the Nation that will have a positive impact on over 200 Coast Guard families and single active duty members.

The state of Coast Guard-owned housing continues to be of particular concern to me. While the vast majority of Coast Guard personnel reside in private sector housing, there are locations where the private sector inventory is insufficient and necessitates that the Coast Guard provide housing for its members. Currently, the Coast Guard owns approximately 3,200 family housing units and 1,523 rooms for permanent party unaccompanied/single personnel at 94 facilities throughout the United States. The average age of Coast Guard housing exceeds 50 years, and we have been challenged to keep up with maintenance and recapitalization needs. Importantly, the FY 2022 President's budget contains \$7 million to address a critical housing project in Houghton, MI, for our members at Coast Guard Station Portage.

The safety and habitability of Coast Guard housing facilities depend on an agile approach to timely maintenance and repair, especially for smaller and more remote housing sites. Certified, deployable housing maintenance teams enable the Coast

Guard to improve living conditions for service members and their families by addressing critical maintenance and repair concerns. The FY 2022 President's budget includes \$1.1 million to support these teams in Districts 1 (New England Region), 13 (Pacific Northwest), and 17 (Alaska).

### **Healthcare**

Available healthcare, and more importantly access to available healthcare, is one of the most important issues affecting Coast Guard families today. Military healthcare is the cornerstone of our quality of life benefit system and is critical to our people. The U.S. Coast Guard is unique among the armed services in that our mission set often dictates that a very high percentage of our workforce is geographically spread out, sometimes at very small commands in especially remote locations in the country. Approximately 50 percent of our members and their families are located more than an hour from the nearest Department of Defense (DoD) military treatment facility, and are reliant upon Tricare Prime Remote.

In these unique and demanding times, access to and availability of healthcare is a challenge for many. The mental health of our workforce is a particular concern to me. The appropriations you provided in FY 2021 expanded access to mental health resources, including licensed social workers and nurse case managers dedicated to the management of behavioral health cases.

Additionally, we were able to make investments in our new telehealth program, which allowed high quality healthcare to continue to be delivered to our workforce despite the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year we deployed a new, web-based telehealth solution called Coast Guard Care Anywhere (CGCA) across 42 clinics and 160 sickbays, including those members enrolled in Tricare Prime Remote. Accessible by Internet browser on personal computing devices or Coast Guard-issued iPad, this app enables a Coast Guard Health professional to care for those members and families in remote locations.

### **Child Care**

Available, affordable, and accessible childcare is another serious quality of life issue for Coast Guard personnel. As previously noted, due to the locations in which we serve, our people are very often located in remote, high-cost areas. High child care costs impact our workforce throughout all geographical areas, but particularly those without access to DoD or Coast Guard Child Development Centers. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain parity with the other armed services with respect to providing our people with quality and affordable child care options.

We thank the committee for their advocacy in the Senate's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The \$120 million included in the bill to build Child Development Centers would be a profound and sustainable benefit to Coast Guard members and their families.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and for all that you do for the men and women of the Coast Guard. I am honored to have had the privilege to serve with and represent our workforce during the last four years and am grateful for your support and understanding of the importance of our mission and the people who execute it. I am very proud of the accomplishments of our service members.

The Coast Guard succeeds through the courage, sacrifice, and devotion of our people. We ask and expect much of our Coast Guard men and women. By asking more of them, we are also asking more from their families. We must continue to evolve our work life programs and initiatives as the needs of our families change, and your enduring support has been vital to our continual evolution.

I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you. I want to start this round of questions by talking about the Great Lakes ice breaker. Climate change does not mean the end of cold winters in the Great Lakes. In fact, three of the worst Great Lakes ice seasons of the past several decades have occurred during the last 7 years. By one estimate, these three winters cost our region's economic—economy approximately \$2 billion, with 10,000 jobs lost due to reductions in maritime commerce and the resulting impacts on manufacturers in the region.

Climate change is also contributing to more extreme weather events, larger quantities of precipitation, and higher lake levels. During the winter, this results in greater risk of flooding because ice collects in rivers to form ice dams. Our communities rely on Coast Guard icebreakers to break up these ice dams and prevent flooding in our communities.

From transportation to saving lives and property from flooding, we need more icebreakers. And that is why I am fighting for a new Great Lakes icebreaker to be funded in our current budget reconciliation bill. Admiral Schultz, yes or no, do you support funding for a new Great Lakes icebreaker in the reconciliation package?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, funding in the reconciliation package—absolutely, in support of that.

Senator BALDWIN. Great. I appreciate your support, Admiral. During the time—during the Lake Michigan ice jam caused flooding last winter, the Coast Guard's only Great Lakes heavy icebreaker was not available, and smaller ice breaking cutters struggled to break through that ice jam. While the Coast Guard eventually accomplished their mission with the current assets, if a second heavy icebreaker had been available last winter, the Coast Guard could have provided more flood relief more quickly. Would you agree?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I don't have all the specifics around that. I would say clearly more capacity and a bigger breaker versus a small breaker that sort of common sense. I would say, you know, depending on what is going on at the time, we could find one breaker, you know, in one part of the Great Lakes—having sailed up, there is quite a great distances. But I think additional capacity, additional heavy capacity, capability is probably a positive there that could have lend to better outcomes there, yes.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, Admiral. Now I wanted to turn to the importance of Buy America policies. Initial procurement costs for major programs like shipbuilding are only a part of the total life cycle cost. In fact, probably less than one-third of the cost, which—with sustainment being a significant portion of the overall cost.

Over the last 18 months, we have also seen complications arising from the disruptions in supply chains when foreign sources are involved. With nearly all of the Coast Guard's assets undergoing transition to new platforms, this is really an opportunity to assess how the Coast Guard is making acquisition decisions with total lifecycle costs and the health of the domestic industrial base in mind. Some past decisions on sourcing critical components have resulted in or are likely to result in more money being spent to support unproven components than what might have been saved in initial acquisition.

I am concerned that recent decisions on components for the polar security cutter are heading down the same path. Would you be willing to commit to working with me and the Ranking Member and the Committee to ensure that your acquisition plans take into consideration the entire lifecycle costs and recognize the value and importance of our domestic industrial base?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Madam Chair, let me start sort of in the reverse order of the question. So that your last point, we absolutely recognize and support, you know, the United States industrial

base, specifically with respect to the polar security cutter. You know, we will certainly explore the ability support, you know, the engineering, the major components through the full lifecycle cost. We do believe the plan we have with the Cat, MaK engines, you know, that have already been purchased through long lead time material, and we have assurances that we will have sufficient engines through the building of the three polar security cutters. A 30 year plan to support those engines, given the complexity in the build and how that ship is built around those engines, it would be a very difficult stage if we are talking about revisiting that decision.

If we are talking about, you know, other places and other fleets, possibly medium breakers, the Great Lakes icebreaker, I think very much that conversation—I think it is a difficult conversation on a ship that we, you know, through a consolidated contract award, we have actually slipped the delivery date to the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2025.

But that is, you know, some part injected by the fact we haven't built an icebreaker in a half century, the COVID complications, a lot of international collaboration that really didn't lend itself to Zoom type calls or face to face. We are trying to do a very ambitious program of building a heavy icebreaker, again undone so in 50 years, on a compressed timeline. I think that engine decision will be very one to—very difficult to reopen at this point without tremendously long delays.

And I believe there is a support system for the full lifecycle cost that platform. That will be that Cat's a very much established distributor, but on a broader case, to your question, yes. To that specific one, I think that is a little bit of more challenging conversation to open up at this point.

Senator BALDWIN. Alright. Ranking Member Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Admiral, I want to talk, begin the discussion, talking about IUU fishing. And as you know, that is not simply illegal fishing. It is a resource problem, a security problem. And it is often intertwined even with human rights violations.

And I know that the Coast Guard has been working hard on this issue, but it is a challenge, and we are seeing increasingly that it is a challenge particularly as it relates to the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese fleets that are literally scouring the world and often trying to hide their IUU involvement.

Can you just give me an update on what the Coast Guard has been doing, and are there things that we can do, we the Congress, to bolster the Coast Guard's ability to counter IUU fishing to better expose those responsible? There is a lot of bipartisan interest in this issue. The reason I just mentioned. And we are going to be working on legislation, but we certainly want the Coast Guard's input.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Ranking Member Sullivan, thanks for the question, and you are absolutely correct. IUU, illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, is a global challenge. You know, and I was up in Newport with the world's Coast Guard, the Navy, in 2018. That was sort of the epiphany for me as services and many of the world's navies looked more like the Coast Guard. I was bombarded

with questions about, how do we work together on this? Less about common——

Senator SULLIVAN. And other countries need our help, smaller countries.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, sir. Not about CT, not about counter-narcotics. They want to talk about fish. And I was back there this fall with the CNO on more of that again. So there is ecological, you know, damages that some near—you know, coastal states, their resources are harvested, and those benefits do not make it back to the coastal nations, those benefits make it out to a trans——

Senator SULLIVAN. Hurts the ability for sustainable fisheries——

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, sir, sustainable fisheries. It is a food sustainment issue. When you look at the rise and projected growth on the African continent, population wise, 40 percent of the protein derives from the ocean there. This is a global problem, sir. What we have done in 2019—excuse me, in 2020 in September we issued what we call a 10-year strategic outlook. And this is not positioning the Coast Guard to be the world's fish cops because we don't have the capacity for that. We are trying to take a lead role to stitch together like-minded thinkers, like minded nations.

We need to partner with NGO, we need to partner with academia. There is a lot of capabilities out there. We need to figure out how we share information and how we illuminate that. We have, if you look in the East and West coast of the African continent, East and West coast of South America, you know, we saw the 350 China flag and, or China characteristic maybe South American flag, but probably in opaque processes, we sent a National Security cutter down there, in the course of three or fourth days identified at least a couple of dozen vessels where their, you know, AIS, their automated information system didn't correlate with their activities or position.

We see the same challenges off the African continent. So I think what we can do is elevate that. I think what the Congress can do is articulate the importance of this. It has been mentioned in the NDAA before. I think it is about collaborating. I think when I go back to just the projected operations support budget for the Coast Guard, that steady growth for the Coast Guard allows us to attenuate this on a global scale.

It is a big fight we are taking off, but I think, sir, we are a recognized leader. We bring a voice of credibility to that. And what we want to do is take a Nation like China, and we say responsible flag states don't send their vessels 9,000 miles away and have no coast—China coast because they are sort of making sure they follow the rules.

Senator SULLIVAN. And try to hide what they are doing.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. Well, look, we look forward to working with you on this. I think there is a lot of bipartisan support for this kind of action in the Senate. And we will be reaching out to you and your team on help, on next steps in terms of legislation. I mentioned in my opening statement the issue of monitoring foreign military exercises.

As you know that massive Russian exercise in the American Alaskan EEZ in 2019 was quite disturbing. And it, you know, I

mentioned some of what happened. What, have you done, what has the Coast Guard done in terms of lessons learned from that? And do you think there were some things in which the Coast Guard was a little bit late to the game in terms of informing our fishing fleet? What are the kind of lessons learned, and what is the Coast Guard's plan to protect U.S. fishing fleet if similar events were to occur in the future?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, sir, Ranking Member Sullivan. So, I would say yes, there are things we learned. You know the Russians, as a nation, have the right to exercise international waters as they are doing—

Senator SULLIVAN. But they don't have the right to shoot off—

Admiral SCHULTZ. No, sir, they did issue—

Senator SULLIVAN.—Alaskan fishing vessel—

Admiral SCHULTZ.—issued what is called the hydroland, which is what they are supposed to do. We realized between the fishing community and that product for, you know, advance notice of what you are doing, there are some communications breakdown.

So, we are working in that middle space, you know, that—I think at that point, an uneducated crowd up there that is just legitimately fishing has a right to expect to continue to fish and do so. It was a function of people not having situations—

Senator SULLIVAN. You are not kind of besmirched in the fleet, you are saying they just didn't know?

Admiral SCHULTZ. I am saying because they didn't know, I think they got caught up in the situation where, hey, they felt like they are being muscled out of there and they were. And had the system worked and they have been educated, hopefully they might have chosen to not fish in that hot area and we could have alleviated all that. But that said, we need to recognize the rights of the Alaskan fishers. And if the Russians are operating and exercising in places where they didn't do the correct notifications, there is obviously a rub that we need to be cognizant of. I think some of that is a presence conversation.

You know, are we up there actively? It is how do we work that middle space to ensure a hydroland actually gets in the hands of an Alaska fisherman operating on the Bering Sea, and that is the place where we have some opportunities for improvement, sir. So, we want to try to avoid that tension point.

And again, I am not here substantiating what Russia is or isn't doing. I am saying they did not do anything that is internationally in violation because they filed the right notification. It was a breakdown in process, and we have tried to sort of walk that back and address that going forward. Hopefully, it doesn't repeat itself.

Senator SULLIVAN. Good. Thank you.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, sir.

Senator BALDWIN. Senator Blumenthal.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT**

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks and welcome to both of our witnesses today. Thank you for your service to our nation, your extraordinary commitment to the Coast Guard. Commandant Schultz, I just want to make sure that I know the answer to this

question, I think I do. The Coast Guard Museum is a continuing priority and will work with us in seeking additional funds, correct?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I am absolutely committed to the establish of a National Coast Guard Museum in New London. We are working with the National Coast Guard Museum Association, yourself and your Senate counterpart, Senator Murphy and the rest of the Connecticut delegation. Yes, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. I have been disturbed by reports that I have seen just recently about merchant marine cadets who have been victims of sexual assault while at sea. And I realize the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is separate from the Coast Guard, but the Coast Guard is responsible for investigating these incidents.

And I wonder if you could tell us whether you have seen an increase in the numbers of reports, whether you are disturbed—I would guess you are disturbed by any report of sexual assault at sea. But has this problem been increasing in number of incidents reported?

Admiral SCHULTZ. So Senator Blumenthal, I am absolutely—it is abhorrent behavior, to think about someone, whether it is a member of our naval services or someone that is a merchant mariner, would be assaulted, sexually assaulted at sea. So, I take great offense with it. We have had less than 10 cases—over the last 10 years, less than 10 cases, less than one case here—it is actually been five cases. So, it is not a lot of cases that are making it to the Coast Guard.

We have investigated each of those five. We referred them to the U.S. Attorney's Office for further action. We had one case where we went after an organization, a shipping company that didn't timely notify. But I suspect there is probably a gap there between actual behaviors occurring at sea and in the manner of reporting.

So I think there's some opportunities to work collaboratively with MARAD and Department of Transportation and shipping companies to make sure these, you know, terrible actions are being reported and then being actioned. But we stand postured to action with our Coast Guard investigative services.

What is difficult is, you see, these sea ships are at sea, rotational crews sometimes 300 days a year. So, things about gathering everyone when we have a case, you know, getting to the ship, preservation of evidence, there is a lot of complexity. But that said, I think there is an area where we all need to do better.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And probably also in preventing them in the first place.

Admiral SCHULTZ. I think clearly prevention is the most important part of this. And then when we have to respond, we have to be aggressive and accountable, hold people accountable.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. I understand that you are committed to implementing the goals and objectives of the recent Rand report—there was a report in August released by the Rand Corporation. It found a need for more diversity, equity, and inclusion. I wonder if you could update us as to the progress on recommendations focusing on outreach and recruiting career development, advancement promotion, those goals within the Coast Guard?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Thanks, Senator. We are absolutely committed. The underrepresented study by Rand was the second. We did a holistic women's study previous years and that has helped us, and we have closed retention gaps. We are stepping out with equal vigor. We have sustained—my first year in office, we created the Personal Readiness Taskforce so studies weren't just shelved, where they were actually things that we would action. We have maintained that into the fourth year of this tenure to action, the URM study in specifics.

We have a cross-functional team that has broken this down into chunks, and we are going to go down every specific recommendation and try to drive them over the goal line. We have invested, sir, from about \$600,000 in DNI initiatives back around 2017 to more than \$12 million right now. And we are serious about this. It kind of reflects back to both the Master's and my statement about being a Nation that is served by a Coast Guard that is more representative of the Americans we serve.

There is no military service that interacts more with the public than the United States Coast Guard. So we got to get this right, and that is absolutely my and the entire top leadership team's stop to attention.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And I am assuming that the commitment extends the Coast Guard academy and outreach and recruitment, as well as working toward inclusion—

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, absolutely. You know, our academy, the class of 2025 is 40 percent women, it is 38 percent underrepresented minorities. We have the highest both women and underrepresented of any of the service academies. But we were driving toward a 50 percent that reflects for women, we are driving toward—you know, we are still in terms of African-Americans in service, we are about 5.5, 6 percent and we need to drive that closer to the 11 or 12 percent that represent society with a propensity to serve. So, we are trying to recruit in different places.

We have stood up five new recruiting officer sites to get to places we haven't success recruited, and we absolutely want to make, you know, our academy that really not just the service academy part, but every Coast Guard officer that commissions goes to New London. So that is a touchpoint.

We want to make sure they are educated leaders, they have an open mind, they leave the fleet with, you know, no biases, no unconscious biases, and they want to be tremendous contributors to our United States Coast Guard going forward.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thanks very much.

Senator BALDWIN. Next, I call on the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Senator Wicker.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI**

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I do appreciate the two witnesses being here. And thank you, Admiral Schultz, for pointing out that the Coast Guard Academy actually leads all of the federally sanctioned service academies in terms of diversity. You are not where you would like to be, but in terms of the academy, you are further down the road toward accomplishment than

everyone else. Some—all the diversity has not translated to the enlisted ranks.

I have got a bill that would require the Coast Guard to partner with institutions such as the historically black community colleges and universities in order to increase diversity in the enlisted ranks. What do you two gentlemen think about that, and was that one of the recommendations that the Rand study mentioned? So we will start with you, Master Chief.

Chief VANDERHADEN. Thank you. Thank you, sir. I appreciate it. So, we will take—we are grateful for all the support we get from the Committee. You gave us the opportunity to bring on some new recruiters this year and we are expanding our Junior ROTC programs. We didn't—we had like one Junior ROTC program, and the Commandant, through his support and through the support for the resources we have got, we have been able to expand that Junior ROTC.

So, I think we are going to do a better job of getting into these high schools to start to tell the Coast Guard story. I visited with some of our members on the Hill and they say, you know, the Coast Guard is the best kept secret. We don't want to be the best kept secret. We want to be well known.

So, we are doing a lot better job of getting out and telling our story. And so we are grateful for this—you know, community colleges are a great place to attract folks who perhaps might could use the GI Bill, might—could use some help from the GI Bill. So, we are grateful for any support that we can get. And you are giving us the ability to also get more folks through Cape May.

This Fiscal Year 2022 budget looks—it looks really good for being able to build out our training center or a boot camp in Cape May so we can get more folks through. That is going to be critically important, and then the training centers as well. You have also given us opportunity to improve quality of life at the mobile stations, which helps us to retain folks that we do recruit.

So, I am grateful, and you know, I wish I had another year of service because I think we are going to make it, we are going to eat into this pretty good, and we are going to make a difference here soon, so thank you.

Senator WICKER. Well, I am glad to hear that you are enthusiastic about Junior ROTC. I am an ROTC graduate myself. But actually, the Rand Corporation has also done extensive studies about the effectiveness of JROTC. And it is way more than a recruitment tool for the military or for the Coast Guard.

It is a way for a subset of a high school to do better than their peers, to graduate at a higher rate, to make better grades, and to do better upon graduation. So, to hear JROTC be mentioned in a favorable light is absolutely music to my ears. And I can tell you Senator Sullivan and I and others on the Armed Services Committee have done our best to help—to fund more opportunities.

And I have never found—I have never found a superintendent or principal that did not respond favorably when I asked how JROTC is at their school, or would you like one at your school? They all say yes. So, that is encouraging. Rather than shift to you on that question, Admiral Schultz, let me just ask, you know, Senator Sullivan believes in showing off the Coast Guard in Alaska, and the

best way to—the best way to understand something is just to go there.

And he took me all over the place from North to South and out on the Aleutian. We went to Kodiak. And there was a refueling pier there used by the Coast Guard to refuel cutters. On more than one occasion, the Coast Guard has had to stop using the pier for fueling operation because high winds put excessive strain on its structural integrity.

Is this an isolated example, Admiral, or what other sorts of operational safety hazards do they face? And what in the world are we going to do about this \$3 billion backlog?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, sir, Senator, thank you—

Senator WICKER. You have got 2 seconds.

Admiral SCHULTZ. I got 2 seconds. Yes, sir, we are going to do something about it. So, we got about \$2 billion in infrastructure backlog, about \$1 billion—

Senator WICKER. \$2 billion?

Admiral SCHULTZ. \$2 billion of infrastructure. About \$1 billion of maintenance and other things. That pier in Kodiak absolutely needs to be replaced at some point. The unfunded priority list has been a very effective tool that members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle have championed topics for us. So, it has allowed us to get after some of those things.

Sir, we do have infrastructure challenge across the Coast Guard. What we are going to continue to do is voice into that. That is part of the readiness there. These are things that detract from the Coast Guard's ability to provide the Nation with the service we need to get after all the challenges America wants its Coast Guard to do. So, you have my commitment, the Master's commitment to put our voices against this.

Take folks out from the Hill that want to see things, from the Administration, show them the challenges, show them what we can do and how we can respond to a Hurricane Harvey from a new facility in Houston, Galveston, where we have a new facility and go rescue 11,000 people off streets of America when there is 52 inches of rain and, you know, 36 hours.

Had we done that from an old facility, that would have been a very different set of circumstances. So modern facilities, modern piers, continued support from the Administration in the Senate allows us to buy down some of that challenge.

Senator WICKER. But an infrastructure bill that addressed this type of hard asset construction would be a godsend—

Admiral SCHULTZ. Sir, your legislation, sir, that gets after, you know, support for the Coast Guard, which is some really niche stuff. And I know you just visited. You get after some things by recruiting in a more inclusive the Coast Guard. You talk about, you know, the pay and a potential shutdown, and the gap in appropriations. That legislation is very helpful, sir. And if I could take 10 seconds, the JROTC program, Jim Clyburn, very helpful.

We got a new program in Northern, North Charleston, not his district, but North Charleston. We have got one in Pinellas County, Florida. That is two on top of one in Miami and out in Camden County, North Carolina. But I think providing up a couple of salaries, maybe some former Coast Guard, and we can touch schools

and STEM communities, and I see 4 becoming 8, becoming 30 in the coming year.

So, we are very excited about the new authorities to the Junior ROTC. So, I think it is going to get us places we haven't been before.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Admiral SCHULTZ. That was more 2 seconds. I apologize, sir.

Senator BALDWIN. Next, I will call on the Chair of the Full Committee, Senator Cantwell.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA CANTWELL,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM WASHINGTON**

The CHAIR. Thank you, Chair Baldwin, and thanks so much for holding this important hearing. Admiral Schultz, you probably could not get a more dedicated group of people on this side of the dais to the missions of the Coast Guard. We are all big supporters of making sure the Coast Guard has the resources that it needs, so it is good to see you and Master Chief Vanderhaden here, so thank you. I want to follow up on my colleague, Senator Blumenthal's questions about sexual assault.

You know that I sent you this letter just recently about sexual assault. I want to say we have worked together on childcare in the Coast Guard and appreciate those efforts. Expanding health care in the Coast Guard. Definitely appreciate those efforts. We have worked with you on paid family leave. Very proud that the Coast Guard was leading the way on getting paid family leave. I think you recognized that 40 percent of your workforce being women, that you had to have better policies, and so we appreciate working there.

I think the issue of sexual assault is the next area where you need to spend some time because I am not sure with this—I would also say it is also clear the Coast Guard has many, many missions and very hard to meet all those missions. But this one, this oversight of other vessels and those vessels and what they are doing, particularly when we are putting young women on those vessels to do research.

So, basically, they are students, and now they are on these vessels. And so, I just want to go back to this issue of, you know, the accounts we have had by Kings Point midshipmen and others about, you know, questions about the Coast Guard, the investigations of U.S. flagged ships. So, I know there are fines. You can issue fines.

But I want to know whether you believe that we need a more aggressive enforcement plan of sexual assaults at sea and the actions that should be taken when we hear of or find incidents?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Well, Madam Chair, I absolutely think it is abhorrent behavior, and we absolutely need to be aggressive. I think what we have had is we have had 10 cases, less than 10—we have had 5 cases over 10 years. So, there is not a lot of cases making to that. We have investigated and referred each and every one of those to the U.S. attorney in the appropriate district.

We had one case where we had a shipping line that was not responsive and we went after them through administrative suspension and revocation process, finding process. So, I would say I sus-

pect there is probably more activities that are going undetected out there, unreported. So, I think we need to—

The CHAIR. Exactly.

Admiral SCHULTZ. We need to get out—we have got to sea just tips line and we are trying to push it out there. We have gone to the various maritime journals and other things to say, here, and here is whom you contact. So, I think there is an education piece. You have absolutely my commitment. We are doing a lot of things. I love to come back and brief the Committee on some of the things our Coast Guard Investigative Service is doing. And then there is some challenges with evidence collection.

These big ships, you know, ply the oceans 320 days a year, rotational crews. We find out after the fact. So getting evidentiary matters—we are trying to model some things. We do some of these telephonically, tele-wise, but you need our medical experts. So, we are looking at different ways to be able to gather evidence, but there is some room for definite—

The CHAIR. Well, I do not think investigation at sea is very hard. And the reason why when you say you think there is probably more there that is undetected, I am saying exactly because we are hearing from them—

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, ma'am. You have my commitment.

The CHAIR.—as whistleblower. So to me, when I look at the fine of \$5,000 to \$10,000, certainly not enough. I think we are going to have to look at increasing that. But as we diversify this workforce, we have to make sure that women are safe at sea and that we have the resources and infrastructure to oversee the operations of these ships that you have oversight over and make sure that we are—that we have a very aggressive action plan to get the behavior that we want from those parent companies. The parent companies have to take this very seriously.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, ma'am. They take it seriously when they feel like there is accountability.

The CHAIR. Yes, we are in agreement on that. OK, so I will look forward to an action plan and a formal response to our letter. On the issue of the California oil spill and this issue of congestion, it seems to me that a new phenomenon has happened, right? We have—we are parking a lot of ships, right, because of whatever you want, lots of different reasons related to the pandemic, and so there has been as many as 100 vessels drifting off the coast, the West Coast, resulting in anchorage areas. So, I know that—I was surprised to learn that the anchorage directly adjacent to the pipeline that we were talking about in the California oil spill had a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Protection Act, which meant it did not go through full environmental review.

So, I am asking this question, we are parking lots of ships. Do we know where we are parking them? And are we parking them too close to these pipelines? And I would hope that you would not—I mean, I am not trying to catch you off guard today. I know you have new informal drift zones to help accommodate more vessels, and I know you are looking at the impacts of this.

In our state, we have anchorages throughout Puget Sound, Homes Harbors being used for the first time in over a decade, which is causing air pollution and noise pollution to communities.

And so I just want to know what you are doing to help manage the situation and help protect wildlife in these areas.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, Madam Chair, you are absolutely correct, there are challenges with the volume and the backlogs, and some of that is, you know, that is obviously not in the Coast Guard lanes attenuate, but managing the risks that goes with shipping, that is squarely in our wheelhouse.

So we are looking at, you know, obviously the case in L.A., the oil spill, we are investigating that, and we are investigating, you know, cause of the factors, was there a ship involved? You know, we made one shipping company and owners and operators party to the investigation here in recent days. But that is just the start of the conversation.

We need to look at that. You know, when you declare an anchorage that is Coast Guard captain of the port functionality, working with the state, working with the localities. We partner through the Harbor Safety Committee. We try to make informed decisions.

The anchorage in question here with this pipeline was an anchorage created back in 2006, and it was created because of the size of larger vessels. You know, these vessels now thousand plus feet that carry 13,000 up to 18,000, soon 20,000 TEU containers on the back, so—

The CHAIR. But we did not—I do not know that we did the environmental review because we didn't know this was going to—

Admiral SCHULTZ. Well, that is what I am saying, ma'am. I think it is the complexity in the changing landscape. So, we need to use this case, I think, to really dive in. You know, I think all our cap of the ports are managing this to a different degree in different places. We have got to make sure, you know, we are at the level of safety we think we are, and we need to look at where—make sure we look, go back and look at where any of these pipelines are approximately. I think there is some learning. I can't attribute, you know, this oil spill yet to a ship situation, but it is a plausible scenario.

We have a vessel that we have made a party to that because it could be the case and we got a lot more investigative work to do, so I don't want to get ahead of red lights on that, but we are absolutely looking, and Senator, you have my commitment to make sure we are—you know, we want to keep the environment safe. We want to make sure it is not collisions at sea, ships drifting offshore. That creates different problems. We have got, you know, we got whales, great whales.

You know, in your area off of L.A., we changed the shipping channels when I was 11th District Commander out there to accommodate the whales in safer fashion and find some mutually compatible places. But this is challenging us in different ways, bigger ships, more ships just in time delivery systems. So ship doesn't want to sit at shore, maybe misses its turn to the dock.

So, there is a lot of moving parts that we have got to work with the other stakeholders on and understand and make sure we understand, you know, that we are doing this as responsibly as a Nation as we can. And there is a Coast Guard piece of that from a safety perspective, absolutely.

The CHAIR. Well, I think you need to think about whether we do an environmental impact or the impact on the wildlife, as to these anchorages.

Admiral SCHULTZ. I am not—the abbreviating that, so I will go back and get smarter.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Admiral SCHULTZ. I don't have an answer for that, ma'am, but I will look at that.

The CHAIR. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator BALDWIN. Next, Senator Johnson.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RON JOHNSON,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. First of all, gentlemen, thank you for your service. Admiral Schultz, on August 23, the FDA approved the Comirnaty vaccine, but the extent of the use—the extent of the authorization under emergency use for the other Pfizer vaccine.

On August 24, Secretary Austin issued his memorandum on the mandate for the military. I think later that month, the Coast Guard said you would follow that basic procedure. Is that correct?

Admiral SCHULTZ. That is correct, Senator. We are mandated vaccine, as is the Department of Defense, that is correct.

Senator JOHNSON. Now the other branches have listed their deadlines. You are a component DHS. The rest of the Federal Government, the deadline for the mandate is November 22. Is that your deadline as well?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I have not publicly stated a deadline yet. I guess by default, as a member of DHS, it would not be disingenuous to say the 22nd, but I have actually sort of removed that decision space to sort of see how things unfold. And we are driving in the right direction toward compliance, but I have not put out a firm date to our Coast Guard men and women yet.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. In the August 24 letter from Secretary Austin, he said the mandatory vaccination against COVID-19 will use only COVID-19 vaccines that receive full licensure, in other words, full FDA approval, in accordance with FDA approved labeling and guidance. At the same time, when the FDA on the 23rd, when they did their distinct approval for Comirnaty, or how we pronounce that, and the extent of the emergency use.

The FDA said there is not sufficient approved vaccine available for distribution of the Comirnaty. So there just was not—as a matter of fact, on September 13, NIH published a statement that Pfizer does not plan to produce any product with these new—of the new version over the next few months, while the EUA authorized product is still available.

So, it does not sound like Comirnaty is going to be available. I have written to the Secretary, I have written to the President, you know, whether that is going to be the case. Are we going to mandate and force members of the military to take a vaccine that is not fully FDA approved? So have you or have you secured enough product of the COMIRNATY to utilize in the forced vaccination program?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I believe the answer to that is, yes. I believe we have sufficient holdings of the approved vaccination, but I will double check on that and circle back to that, but I believe that is the case.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. I would definitely appreciate that. And quick follow up, what are you going to do with the remembrance Coast Guard that refuse to take the vaccine? What is going to be your procedure?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, what we are trying to do right now is we are trying to drive folks toward understanding the benefit of the vaccine, the risk to the force from a readiness standpoint, education. We have had folks to come in—there is a lot of information out there. Folks come in, they want to see the vials and we bring them into the clinic. We show them the vials. We make the Chief Medical Officer or staff available to answer questions.

And I would hope we—you know, we are about 92.2 percent for shots, so about 90 percent for total vaccination across the active force, a little lower percentage in the reserves, but some challenges as reserves are spread all over and disaggregation. So, we continue to educate. We have put some mitigating strategies in place. So, if you are not vaccinated, you may not attend an advanced training course or curriculum until you get vaccinated.

In terms of, you know, discharging, those things within on the active side somewhere just south of 3,000 unvaccinated folks. You know, there is some portion of that that have religious accommodations. We have—we are still processing those. Everyone will go through a chaplain. We have not acted on them yet. There are medical waivers in there.

So, we are trying to really get our arms around what those specific numbers are, and then the courses for it. We have not made any decisions regarding administrative decisions, but we are looking like the other services at those actually.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you. We are getting an awful lot of letters and e-mails from people pretty concerned about this mandate, so I hope you take that in consideration. Let's shift gears in terms of the Southern border. I know that the Coast Guard works within DHS, primarily drug interdiction. Let me first ask you, because I have asked this question of Secretary Marcus, do you believe the Southern border is secure?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, you ask me that question through the specific lens of narcotics smuggling or just writ large?

Senator JOHNSON. Just secure—when we are, you know, encountering 200,000 people per month, over 600, 700 per day, that is overwhelming the systems. It is opening up channels for drug trafficking, other human trafficking. Do you believe the border is secure?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I would say that—

Senator JOHNSON. Otherwise, do you believe the border is closed? I think that is the terminology the secretary uses.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I think it would be disingenuous to say the border is closed. I mean, we clearly have seen numbers come in, you know, unaccompanied children and some types of families. So, we know there are numbers, tens of thousands and thousands coming in on a monthly basis.

I would not say the border is closed. In terms of the decision about what type of Nation and border policy want, that is above my pay grade. I would say when there is more traffic at the border and the Border Patrol is stretched thinner, there is a higher propensity for illicit activity occurring at the border, I think the answer to that is clearly, yes.

Senator JOHNSON. So my concern is how are we utilizing personnel between the Coast Guard, between DHS—DHS also helps in drug interdiction, and they had to pull those people off of drug interdiction, as the Coast Guard, provide personnel to just deal with the enormous flow? I know there is one report where a Coast Guard was helping evacuate, to airlift some of the illegal immigrants off the border into the interior. So what could you just comment on in terms of what the personnel movement has been?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I would say when you are dealing with, you know, a couple of hundred thousand people a month at the border, it is an all hands on deck evolution, so it is a capacity challenge. We assisted the Department of Homeland Security for about 6 days.

We moved, I believe the number was up around 1,390 folks from Del Rio to other processing sites in Texas. We had 29 flights. We had three C-130 aircraft, and one C-27 fixed wing that were supporting that mission. So, it was less than probably three dozen Coast Guard men and women to support that. But that was a department challenge, and the Coast Guard clearly, part of the DHS team, stepped in to help on that.

Is that a place where I see Coast Guardsmen being involved all the time? No, but that was a mission that I felt we brought some unique capabilities to. In terms of other challenges at the border, I have had medical people down there supporting Border Patrol, so that frontline Border Patrol men and women could get to the border.

We have had some general purpose Coastees there to allow frontline border people to get to the border. So, I think there is an ongoing role. It is sort of episodic right now for the Coast Guard.

Senator JOHNSON. OK, well thank you for that. I am out of time.

Senator BALDWIN. Next, Senator Duckworth will be participating remotely, as I understand.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS**

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Madam Chair. It is a pleasure to join you today. And I want to thank our witnesses for being here. And gentlemen, if you are looking for places to put JROTC programs, I invite you to come to Illinois and all of my communities of color along the Mississippi River, not the least of which Cairo, Illinois, was a major Port, Union port from Union logistics during the Civil War. Another community of color that is struggling and sure could use a JROTC program for the young people growing up there.

But I would like to—my first question to be an international one. Like a number of my colleagues on the Commerce Committee, I also serve on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and I am particularly interested in the Coast Guard's engagement with our al-

lies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region through joint operations, exercises, and training. The Coast Guard has, for example, sent two cutters, given two cutters to Vietnam, another one to Sri Lanka, and many other nations around the world, but also an Indo-Pacific.

Admiral Schulz, can you explain how the Coast Guard's international partnerships strengthen our Nation's readiness to engage in great power competition in the Indo-Pacific region?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, absolutely. Thank you for the question. Thank you for your service. We, recently the CNO, Admiral Gilday, myself, and General Berger, you know, back in the late part of calendar 2020, put out tri-services, maritime advantage at sea, and it tied together about the unique complementary roles of how we bring all domain capability, naval capability against challenges around the globe and a big part of that was oriented around the Indo-Pacific part of the world.

You know what we have, ma'am, is we support the Indo-Pacific 7 fleet Commander with National Security cutters. On occasion, we have the Coast Guard cutter MONROE that is just wrapping up a multi-month deployment there. She exercised a MOA with Taiwan that was penned here in late March. She exercised with the Japanese Coast Guard and Japanese Self-Defense Naval Forces. We worked with the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency. The Indonesian BAKAMLA is their equivalent to the Coast Guard. So, we can do a lot of capacity building. We have Coast Guard liaisons, attachés in that part of the world.

We have a new attaché going to Singapore next summer. We partnered also with the MONROE, with the Australians, and multiday multi-Australian naval forces working with our Coast Guardsmen. I broaden that out a little bit and look across the Indo-Pacific region outside of the South China Sea, East China Sea. We put new, three new fast response cutters, 154 foot patrol craft in Guam, and I was out there for the commissioning. They are stretching about 10,000 miles of nautical mile range.

Sometimes teamed up with the Coast Guard Buoy Tender, another platform that extends their ability for logistic support. And they were just doing some work out there in the region with a Nation. This Nation had a Australian provided patrol boat that went aground, so we helped them cover down in some of their fisheries enforcement efforts here in that gap. So, I think you are going to see an increasing demand—so, I know you are seeing an increasing demand signal from my DOD shipmates, colleagues, and Indo-Pacific for more high end National Security cutters to operate in the region, more extended operations across the vast Oceanic region, where there is a great competition for, you know, checkbook diplomacy of a China versus human to human interaction, you know, sort of beholden to the like-minded, partner-shared view of free and open oceans.

I think that is where the Coast Guard brings some unique capability. China uses its Coast Guard, and its maritime militias are actioning on it, and they sit back and say, we are not militarizing the Indo-Pacific, it is the United States Navy, you know, it is other allied partners.

I would tell you, yes, you use your Coast Guard and who better to call out those behaviors by their Coast Guard than the United States Coast Guard, that I think is a recognized, you know, global force of good here.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Admiral. And if you could provide me an answer within written format because we are running out of time here. Could you give us a potential update to the fleet mix and what specific actions to that fleet mix would you recommend Congress consider as we seek to empower the Coast Guard to expand its presence operations in the Indo-Pacific region? I just want to touch on affordable housing for Coastees. I am a Coastees family.

Now, my brother was a Coast Guardsman of color, Asian-American, who dropped out of the Coast Guard, who wanted to be a lifer but left and because he just couldn't sustain the lifestyle and he needed to go make some more money. And so, I am concerned that it is very difficult for service members in the Coast Guard to be able to afford rent, affordable housing in areas of families must compete with tourism and growth of online homestay services such as Airbnb's. And so, I would like to have a conversation with you about that in terms of what we can do to help you with this matter.

And then finally, I do want to close by saying that I have received feedback that the lack of basic support, such as lactation accommodations for female Coastees, contributes to a sense that female service members might choose between serving in the Coast Guard and starting a family. And I will submit those questions for the record to address that issue. Thank you and I yield back.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Thank you, Senator. Good to see you, ma'am, and we will circle back with your staff and try to address all those issues you raised there.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

Senator BALDWIN. We are going to start a second round of questioning. And in honor of the Democrat, Republican tradition, I am going to call on my Ranking Member first.

Senator SULLIVAN. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. And gentlemen, let me dig into a little bit more. I talked about the icebreakers, the polar security cutters. And Admiral, you and I have talked about what is a concern of mine, I think it is a concern of yours, which is a gap in coverage, given that the fire aboard the HEALY, you know, that left us, our country, with one capable icebreaker. You and I talked about this idea of—on the unfunded priority list for an immediate lease of the potential for a capable vessel.

There was some progress being made. I think it has kind of been stalled. And then more specifically or longer term as we build these polar security cutters. My own view, which I know you are very familiar with, is that at least one of these should be actually home ported in the Arctic. We have authorized six, we are building three. Now there has been some discussion recently of home porting perhaps the HEALY in Alaska. Can you touch on both of these short-term leasing issues?

Have made progress on those? And then the longer term basing issues. Again, I just think it makes complete strategic sense to have icebreakers home ported in the place that they are going to

be operationally most relevant, which is the Arctic, which is Alaska. I know that in the lower 48 it can take up to 2 weeks. It certainly—I know from your perspective you want to put those where there are currently some, and I think that makes sense. But if we have more, with the option of the HEALY, I would like your views on both of those topics.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, Ranking Member Sullivan, thank you for the question and the questions plural. I would tell you, in terms of the conversation about leasing an available icebreaker, sir, those conversations continue. I think we have pivoted the conversation from potentially a lease to maybe a purchase scenario, and we remain engaged with the Administration and National Security staff—

Senator SULLIVAN. Do we need to do anything here, we the Congress? Again, I think you are seeing here Coast Guard assets, Coast Guard infrastructure, Coast Guard icebreakers, whether in the Arctic or on the Great Lakes, is really bipartisan. So, you know, if you have asks that can help us accelerate that, please let the Congress know. Is there things that we—

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I will tell you in that I think the conversation, the energizing, the conversation about the geostrategic importance of the high latitudes, keep that voice, keep amplifying that. I think it is important. I do not have the wherewithal in my budget as we are building, you know, five different capital ship programs right now from MECs, OPCs, fast response cutters, waterways commerce cutters, and port security cutters. To lift the, an icebreaker purchase and or lease, there was talk about potentially the Administration lifting that. You know that piece seems to be on little less firm ground right now.

So, I think how we would fund that, I think we included a wedge on the unfunded priority list to the tune of \$150 million. That would procure the vessel or maybe start initial lease. I think in my mind that the smart way forward in terms of return on taxpayers investments, probably to procure that vessel, keep it in our inventory, but we would need sustainment funding on that so there is clearly a piece for the Congress.

In terms of the broader conversations, sir, about ice breaking capacity, future home ports, I owe you some feedback from our Alaska homeporting study, that is in final iterative review inside the headquarters. It hasn't made it up to the front office yet. I believe it is in cutter forces, have coming out of the engineers and things on that, so I believe we will be able to give you some feedback on that. Sir, we have talked about different options in the Arctic.

You know, I have consistently talked about a 6-3-1 strategy, you know. That one was getting going. So PSC number one, under-construction a lot of goodness there. We talked about a minimum of three heavies. That has been the conversation. You know the story there. And then there is a conversation about what is beyond that.

We did some upgraded homework after the high latitude, the High MAR studies. Arguably, you can make a good business case for six to nine breakers for the Nation. Right now, our focus is on—

Senator SULLIVAN. Look again, Russia has 50, and 54 is a number I know and many of which are nuclear, some of which are heavily weaponized, so we are way behind.

Admiral SCHULTZ. So I think there is conversation about what is in the beyond three—and then what is in the beyond three, where do you cite those? You know, when we look at Alaska, you know, we have had the conversation, you and I, about potentialities in Kodiak. You know Kodiak has some challenges with the water depth. They have some challenges with limited pier space, you know. But was there a conversation about medium breakers? Different water depths might be a different conversation there. You have talked about Seward before. I think there is some conversation here.

Something like the HEALY—or the HEALY. That is 145 crew members. You have been very generous, the Committee here on support for housing in Kodiak, and we are three phases sort of through the wire on funding with the Committee support. We would have to have a similar kind of lift, I think, to do something in Seward in terms of the soft support. Then we look at the maintenance support for a ship like that.

You know, the HEALY is now coming in, you know, approaches 25 year marker in the not too distant future. I think there is conversation, sir, that align with your interests when we bring that conversation beyond the three polar security cutters, and we are committed to continue the dialogue and keep an open mind on that.

Senator SULLIVAN. Right.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Thank you, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you. Master Chief Vanderhaden, I recently traveled to the Coast Guard station in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, and met with the crew on the Coast Guard icebreaker MOBILE BAY. And it was very clear to me that ice breaking, and buoy tending are both very hard work. While that mission will never be easy, it seems to me that there are opportunities to make life a little bit easier for Coast Guard members and their families. So, I am going to touch upon the housing issue as well as a few others.

In addition to career development and training, I've heard from Coast Guard members and their families stationed in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, about the challenges with their aging facilities, which I will add were originally built in 1886, when it was still called the U.S. Lifesaving Service, and also the lack of childcare availability and the difficulty in finding housing.

One Coast Guard member who was recently assigned there said that she camped for most of the summer with her children. They enjoyed it, but they won't in the Wisconsin winters. And a place like Sturgeon Bay, where the existing housing stock is quite expensive because it is also co-located with an area of lots of tourism that people enjoy that area. So, this is an issue Coast Guard wide, not just on the Great Lakes. I am sure it is apparent in Alaska and on both salty coasts.

So, I am working hard to secure funding to rebuild stations like Sturgeon Bay in the reconciliation package. But I wonder if you can talk a little bit about the basic allowance for housing. The basic

allowance for housing, BAH, is often not sufficient to cover the costs of rent or a mortgage.

And it seems to me that that model is really designed for the Department of Defense and isn't working for many Coast Guard families. So have you observed members struggling to afford housing? And what do you think can be done to address these challenges?

Chief VANDERHADEN. Well, thank you very much. Master Chief Olson said he really enjoyed your visit. He got a lot out of that, and the head of the crew really appreciated your attention to them. So, and then the MOBILE BAY, same thing. I was kind of on your heels a little bit for that trip and they loved it. I tell you, that station is just amazing, an old lifesaving station. They have really kept it together with bubble gum and baling wire and done a magnificent job of continuing to do great operations out of there.

And they are grateful for your support, and they are getting some funding for that to update that station. DOD funds BAH at 95 percent of the actual costs for the military housing area, and DOD is really the one that can move the needle in big—where there is a lot of DOD—if they are not collecting data where you are, they are not going to, you are not going to enjoy the—it is not going to work for you.

So, we are doing a really fine look at the military housing area and our policy of how we draw our military housing areas and then where we can—if there is a neighborhood that is potentially not where we would want our folks to live, that we can exclude—we are looking at exclusion zones.

So, we are—and COVID. You know, of all the bad things of COVID, this is one that really caused us to stop and take a look and say, wow, housing costs really went up. So, our housing office has been thoroughly examining every military housing area. Now the interesting thing about the Great Lakes is there is something called the Coast County area and some of them are not—BAH is not derived by a military housing area, but by the county. And it has to do with other statistics that I am not exactly sure how that is done, but we are really looking at every housing.

I met with my service senior enlisted, and they are committed to—DOD personnel and readiness is committed to really fine tuning their data collection. And they have increased the BAH in 56 military housing areas preliminarily this year and a temporary basis. They are optimistic that the data is going to show that we need to raise the BAH.

Now, sometimes I can give you all the money in the world you want, but if there is no inventory, it is not going to help you. It sounds like in Sturgeon Bay that that was the case, that it didn't matter what your housing allowance was if we need to work on—we need to work on perhaps Government leases. We need to work on perhaps even working with community leaders.

In Seward, I visited Seward and Governor Doug Levy is working with some of the builders to say, hey, we have got Coastees here. They need to live here. They are going to be here for a long time. Why don't we build some apartment complexes and some condos and things like that so that—and we can almost guarantee that they are going to occupy those, and it is going to be a win-win for everybody.

So, we are working with local elected leaders to try to increase the inventory in these areas. And so we are we are committed to trying to help our people. And really, Admiral Schultz directed our budget folks to divert some funds into our housing office so that we can get after some more Government leases. So, I appreciate your support and we looking at every option to try to help our folks.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you. Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Thanks, Madam Chair. And I do think between the Chair and myself, you will see really strong support on the housing issue. I just want to end this hearing and thanks again for the testimony, two quick questions. Admiral one for you. As you know, we recently passed legislation making it easier for vessels home ported in Alaska and other places to contract repairs in the local shipyards. That is an issue for us, and I am pretty sure it is an issue in Wisconsin as well. I recently had a meeting with some of your senior staff voicing concerns over the lack of utilization of that new legislation. It was a constructive meeting so, you know, I don't want to be complaining here.

The vision, I think, you know, and you and I have talked about it, which makes sense all around for the local economies, for the Coast Guard, because you would save money as opposed to sending ships for heavy maintenance down to Alameda and other places, you could do it locally, the crews would be closer to their home ports.

Do you have any updates on that or just—I know, you know that it is a priority? We got the law change, working with your—actually your staff to help us on the language. But any updates on that, sir, that you want to—

Admiral SCHULTZ. Yes, sir. I know you and I have worked on this for a long time long. We got to the place. We have got it all times. And then some of the timing when they want to do the fishing fleet, the timing of us, the sort of us operating on a 1-year budget cycle. And really, we have we have sort of ceded the first quarter of the Fiscal Year, almost to the first and second quarter sometime because of the uncertainty with annual appropriations.

So, we try to pack a lot of work into almost the last 7 months of the year or the second half of the year. We have got some 2 year ability for forex maintenance funds. That was very helpful, and we have got to continue to renew that. So, we are looking at four potential ship contracts that could be done in Alaska in 2022. So, I think there are some opportunities for us here to continue to work. We will make sure your staff is up to speed. I think there is a possibility that we could, you know, steer some of that work to a shipyard up there.

There is obviously just the timing of when our ships come up in the budget—there is the availability of the shipyard to do that kind of work. But we understand the intent. I think we were committed to trying to still get a successful outcome here where, you know, work—and from our crews, you know, you send men and women to sea for some portion, 185 days a year.

You know, being down somewhere in the lower 48, just is a tougher challenge in terms of quality of life and family separation generally. You know, summer months, kids are out of school. You

are sailing a lot, so there are definite upsides for us when we can do the work closer to home. So we need—

Senator SULLIVAN. You know, the Admirals that I have talked to in District 17 think it is a cost saver, a pretty significant cost saver for the Coast Guard, too. So, I look forward to working with you, continuing to work with you on that. I think we have made good progress. And Master Chief, I was glad to hear you mentioned in your opening testimony morale is high. That was going to be one of my questions, given how close you are to it. And that you strategically visited Wisconsin and Alaska before this hearing.

That is really good staff work, whoever made that happen, so well done. But my question for you is just a general one. In your travels, both to Wisconsin, Alaska and beyond, you are the senior enlisted for the whole service. What were you hearing that were good things? You know, you say morale is high. Why is it high? I love hearing that. What are the problematic issues? What are the issues that are keeping the Coast Guard men and women up at night and their families? We want to make sure we are taking care of the families as well.

Chief VANDERHADEN. Thank you both. So, morale is high because they love—people love what they do. They have a very rewarding mission. We empower our junior members to make a difference as I go around and you probably when they put people—it is younger—it is the young folks that are the ones that are being recognized because they are just doing tremendous work.

So, I think there is a sense of pride and the knowledge that they are making a difference the minute they show up at their unit. So, that is a good thing. The challenge—so our computer systems and some of our technology, we haven't been able to make investments in. Our servers are max capacity, and we are eating in, we are doing what's called the "tech revolution" thanks to support from this committee and support from the Congress. We were able to leverage technology.

We really, you know, it is kind of funny that, you know, they don't have any problem communicating on their on their personal devices. But when they try to log on to some of our Coast Guard workstation, our software programs and things like that, they are they are just difficult. And they are difficult in Wisconsin and Alaska, because the bandwidth, the bandwidth challenges we have and things like that. So, we are really making a significant and a committed investment to improving our C5I, our computer systems, trying to increase the efficiency so that like if our folks go out and do a boarding, a law enforcement boarding, they will have mobility where they can do that, they are not just handwriting things anymore.

They are actually typing into a tablet and coming back and uploading that information instead of having to write everything out and come back. And so, we are trying to leverage technology, and I think that is the biggest thing that we can do to help our people right now because they know it is out there, we just haven't been able to get it to them. But thanks to you we will.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I think it is those enabling things—if you don't, if I can—

Senator BALDWIN. Yes, you go ahead.

Admiral SCHULTZ. I think those enablers, the housing, the childcare, you know, we have 10 CDCs across the Coast Guard. Thinking about infrastructure, we would like to have more. And you know, we are looking as we go big and Seattle and Charleston that we clearly want to upgrade facilities, build new facilities.

I think in the interim periods, you know, we have gone from, you know, up about \$13 million if you include where we hope to come out of the 2022 budget for childcare subsidies, that allows us to drive down some of these immediate needs. But there is a lot of uncertainty out there. So, the housing costs have never been more challenging. Some of the temporarily fare through the end of December.

You got to go to make the business case and, you know, you have to show your costs. Those are on people's minds. And then we are in an environment now as of one January 2018 and this new blended retirement, maybe not a 2021 conversation, but you sort of fast forward a young Coast Guard man or woman or dual military couple, they are paying themselves first. They get to that 12 year point in the last move they had was very difficult, a lot of out of pocket expenses.

You know, they are having a hard time finding childcare and someone looks and says, hey, boy, you are kind of a skilled American. Why don't you come join my team? I see what Vanderhaden, and Schultz are paying, and they go right down the table years, and they offer you a \$30,000 increase in pay and you stay put, childcare. It is a competitive place. So, I think it is all those enabling functionalities where the Congress can continue to help. People love their work. People love being on the Coast Guard team. We got challenges and we are working those challenges.

But I think it is those enabling things that allow us to compete and keep the Coast Guard an attractive place to work. It is going to get increasingly more important. I say to folks, the biggest challenge facing the organization for the 27th, 28th, 29th Commandant is going to be challenge management and human capital retention.

Senator SULLIVAN. Well, keep us posted on those, you know, legislatively or, you know, just administratively. I remember a couple of years back, the DOD came out with that policy that was put in the Coast Guard and a women in the back of the line on the CDCs. I was like, are you kidding me? So, those are the kind of things keep us posted on. We want to make sure we are helping.

Admiral SCHULTZ. No, DOD partners have been great partners. So we are working, I think, better than we ever had before. But thanks for helping us.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, absolutely.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Thank you.

Senator BALDWIN. I understand Senator Blackburn has joined us remotely. Let me see if that is still the case.

Senator BLACKBURN. Yes, I am here.

Senator BALDWIN. Alright. Senator Blackburn, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator BLACKBURN. Well and thank you all for the hearing. I have just really one thing, Admiral Schultz coming to you. We have just recently celebrated the commissioning of the Coast Guard station in Memphis, and we are certainly looking forward to that. And our—would love to hear from you on the record. I mean, people in Memphis are really thankful and excited about this, and I think it speaks to the growth of the mission of the Coast Guard. But for the record, I would love to hear from you what your expectation is for that facility and for their ability to serve the Coast Guard in the future?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Well, Senator, good to see you, and thanks for your continued support of the men and women in uniform and all the armed services. You know, ma'am, we turned the operations, the boat operations are sort of from a boat house into a station. The station means you have an officer in charge and that is a position that goes with broader authorities.

And I think that allows us to better address the maritime challenges, whether that is search and rescue on the riverway system there, whether that is, you know, responding to security, hazardous material transit, some waterways challenges. There is always different things that impact the waterways in the heartland region there.

I think actually designating that as a station and giving—you know, it is a First Class Petty Officer that leads that station. Given him or her the requisite authorities is a better operation than we had there before. We had sort of an amalgamation of sort of a boat forces operation with less clear construct on what authorities they had to do the missions. I think it is cleaner for the partners in the region. And I think will be a more effective Coast Guard there because of this change, ma'am.

Senator BLACKBURN. Well, I think there are plenty of people at the Port of Memphis that agree with you, and they are just really very hopeful for what having this new station is going to bring their way. There is just one other question that I have had as I have listened to some of Senator Sullivan's questions and the conversation that has ensued.

And this would be for either of you. As we look at great power competition and as we look at how things—how we address the Arctic governance, is there any aspect or any area where our interests align with China and Russia?

Admiral SCHULTZ. Senator, I would say. You know, the Senator kind of chuckled and he talked about self-declared near Arctic Nation when he mentioned China's interests in the Arctic. You know, China had one research vessel they got from the Ukrainians, the Snow Dragon one. They built the second one in China. They are now building, you know, building heavy breakers, whatever that means. They have even entertained the conversation of a nuclear breakers. I think we have to pay attention to what is China's interest in the Arctic.

We have seen them up off the Pacific or Alaska Arctic for 8 or the last 12 or so years. And I think, you know, arguably they are down there surveying where we have undersea cables and they are

up there paying attention to us, citing fifth generation fighters in places like Iceland. They are clearly interested in the trillion dollars of minerals that are on the ocean floor. That is shallow water access to energy, 13, 15 percent of the untapped petroleum in the world, the third of the LNG.

So, I think we have to be circumspect about China's interests. I look at China over in the Northern sea route, in the partnership with Russia on the Amal Energy. And you look at all the economic benefit that Russia is deriving. About 25 percent of their GDP derives from Arctic activities. They are militarizing the Arctic, as a Senator Sullivan spoke about earlier. With Russia, Russia chairs the Arctic Council right now. They took over in the spring.

They also chair the Arctic Coast Guard Forum. So, things like sailing the HEALY through the Northwest Passage is a demonstration of our ability to partner with Canada. We pushed it over to Greenland. We can collaborate with the Danes, the French. I met last night with the Danes and Norwegians earlier in the day.

So we are absolutely, you know, partnering with the other seven Arctic nations, including Russia. We need to have a constructive dialog there, but I think we have to pay attention to what are their intentions. We want the Arctic to remain a safe, secure, environmentally sound location where they have the environmental mess when the permafrost, you know, cause the structure to fail and its spread oil across seven eight miles of water. We offered to help. I think we were going to continue to stay on the high ground, continue to be a good environmental partner to find common places.

But we also have to pay attention to what people say and what they do. I think there is a gap there between the audio and the video sometimes, and we need to call that out as appropriate.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you. I appreciate that, and I think it is fair to say that as you mentioned, Russia and the other partner nations, there are some aligned interests there, but there is more of an adversarial tone as we look at China. Thank you all very much.

Admiral SCHULTZ. Thank you, Senator. And I kind of try to use term competitive and avoid adversarial. But there is not a lot of space between those two terms sometimes.

Senator BLACKBURN. I got it. Thank you.

Senator BALDWIN. Well, thank you. Our rounds of questioning have come to a close. The hearing record will remain open for two weeks until November 2, and any Senators who would like to submit questions for the record should do so by November 2.

We ask that your responses be returned to the Committee as quickly as possible and in no case later than two weeks after receipt. That concludes today's hearing. Thank you again.

[Whereupon, at 4:09 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]



## A P P E N D I X

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MARIA CANTWELL TO  
KARL L. SCHULTZ

### **Motor Boat Replacement**

*Question.* I have heard loud and clear from our Nation's surfmen there is a dire need for a replacement for the 52-foot motor lifeboat. The 52-foot motor lifeboat is crucial to sustaining coastal economies in the Pacific Northwest. The 52' motor lifeboat does more than search and rescue, these boats are essential to determining when the Columbia River Bar may open to vessel traffic. The Columbia River system which is responsible for movement of 50 million tons of cargo valued at near \$24 billion each year, on average.

Please provide a detailed update on the acquisition of the 52' motor lifeboat replacement. Please include specific steps that the Coast Guard has taken, and will take, to speed up this priority acquisition.

*Answer.* The replacement for the Coast Guard's 52-foot Special Purpose Craft—Heavy Weather (SPC-HWX) is in the preliminary acquisition stage. Market research and targeted industry engagements with U.S. based boatyards and design firms with the capability to support the 52-foot (SPC-HWX II) replacement acquisition were expeditiously completed. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approved the SPC-HWX II's Mission Needs Statement and the DHS Joint Requirements Council approved the Coast Guard's request to conduct a tailored approach for requirements development. The Coast Guard completed the SPC-HWX II's pre-acquisition indicative design studies based on developed thresholds and objectives to analyze significant tradeoffs and overall feasibility. The overall analysis of design tradeoffs will support our efforts to finalize the DHS requirement documents.

*Question.* In addition to facilitating commerce on the Columbia River, the 52's can tow large fishing vessels through heavy surf, a crucial need in the Pacific Northwest. As you know, the 47' motor lifeboat lacks the range and tow capacity of the 52'. Does the Coast Guard agree that this tow capacity must be maintained in the future 52' replacement platform?

*Answer.* The Coast Guard understands the range and tow limitations of the 47' Motor Life Boat compared to the 52' SPC-HWX. Any recapitalization effort to replace the 52' SPC-HWX will provide similar capabilities to operate in the Pacific Northwest.

### **Coast Guard Retention**

*Question.* Recruitment and retention of both women and people of color is imperative as we look to invest in and strengthen the Coast Guard workforce. In June 2020, the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General released a report that found the Coast Guard Academy did not adequately address allegations of race-based harassment. Numerous external and internal studies have identified issues as well as solutions for addressing race-based harassment within the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard has taken some action, yet race-based harassment and discrimination continue.

In addition to the work that has already been done, what new steps will be taken to shift the culture of the Academy and in the Coast Guard and end race-based discrimination and harassment?

*Answer.* The Coast Guard recognizes that race-based harassment and discrimination are problems that exist across society and have no place within our service. The Coast Guard is striving to shift its culture through implementing its 2019–2023 Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan that includes training (in-person and online), supporting and routinely having inclusive dialogues and listening sessions, and including inclusive leadership as a part of personnel evaluations for accountability. The Coast Guard is committed to increasing the representation of women and minorities at all levels of the organization supporting the President's executive orders. The Di-

versity & Inclusion Action Plan Implementation Team (DIAP IT), Inclusive Leadership Excellence and Diversity Council (ILEAD), and Personnel Readiness Taskforce provide direct support to this goal. Additionally, the Service continuously reviews talent management processes and procedures to remove barriers in the career lifecycle, will aid in creating systems that are equitable and that lead to improved retention of women, LGBTQ members, and underrepresented minorities. The Coast Guard publicizes opportunities for diversity and inclusion training and dialogue via Coast Guard-wide messaging, including articles such as this one—<https://www.mycg.uscg.mil/News/Article/2877699/change-agents-advance-diversity-and-inclusion-through-accessible-training-and-c/>—detailing change agent training and effects.

*Question.* Many of these studies do not consider impacts and needs specific to LGBTQ service members. Will the Coast Guard commit to the inclusion of these issues in all relevant future assessments to ensure LGBTQ members' needs are properly identified, understood, and addressed?

*Answer.* While these studies do not directly consider impacts and needs specific to LGBTQ members, the Coast Guard seeks information correlating to these studies through collaboration with other government agencies, affinity groups, subject matter experts and the evaluation of Coast Guard data, governing regulations, data accessibility, human protection boards' and institution review boards' authorizations and funds availability. The Coast Guard values the views and needs of its LGBTQ members and will further examine its ability to conduct workforce research that includes questions about sexual orientation and gender identity that meets our goal to be as inclusive as possible without infringing on the privacy of our workforce. Previously, the Coast Guard's Institutional Review Board, the internal Coast Guard Board that makes recommendations to the approving authority for research protocols, determined that asking all Coast Guard members to self-identify their sexual orientation or gender identity was a privacy issue.

### **Sexual Assault at Sea**

*Question.* I am deeply troubled by the recent stories that have come to light from U.S. Merchant Marine Academy ("USMMA") midshipmen experiencing rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment during "Sea Year," a training program where midshipmen are placed on U.S. flagged vessels for credentialing training. In recent communications with Congress, the acting Maritime Administrator stated the agency would put Sea Year on pause while they develop a plan to keep midshipmen safe at sea. This plan will include coordination with Coast Guard Investigative Services to improve response and investigation of sexual assault at sea.

What will the Coast Guard do to improve coordination with the USMMA and the Maritime Administration on matters relating to sexual assault at sea?

(Please provide specific steps the Coast Guard has taken and will take to improve responses to sexual assault at sea.)

*Answer.* The Coast Guard is working closely with the Maritime Administrator (MARAD) on matters affecting all mariners (e.g., credentialed mariners, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy midshipmen, cadets) related to sexual assault and sexual harassment (SA/SH) at sea. If the mariners are midshipmen or maritime academy cadets, a report of sexual assault at sea prompts a thorough investigation and coordination between the Coast Guard, MARAD, and the respective maritime academy.

Additionally, the Coast Guard collaborated with MARAD during the development of the Every Mariner Builds a Respectful Culture (EMBARC) program. The Coast Guard published Marine Safety Information Bulletin 11/21 to support the EMBARC program by establishing tools, applications, and detailed reporting mechanisms for SA/SH incidents.

### **Childcare Services**

*Question.* The retention of women in the Coast Guard is highly dependent on access to quality, accessible, and affordable childcare. I championed language in the last Coast Guard bill to improve the access to childcare and fought to secure \$120 million for new childcare development centers in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (H.R. 3684).

What additional appropriations, resources, or authorizations are required to meaningfully expand access to childcare services for Coast Guard members?

*Answer.* The most impactful way to expand access to childcare services for Coast Guard members is through increased childcare subsidy benefits. Additional funds would allow the Coast Guard to increase funding for members where accredited child care is cost-prohibitive, expand school-age care and fee-assistance options, and expand access to civilian employees.

*Question.* Are there additional locations in which Coast Guard-owned childcare development centers are being considered? If so, what is the timeline for consideration, and which locations are under consideration?

*Answer.* Additional locations are being considered for construction of Coast Guard-owned Child Development Centers—this list includes a variety of locations across the country and considers a number of factors including local need, cost and availability of child care, as well as engineering feasibility and construction factors. A list of these potential locations and implementation timeline are currently under review.

*Question.* In addition to Coast Guard owned and operated childcare development centers, the “Child Care Subsidy Program” is an important resource for families. Does the Coast Guard support expanding this program?

*Answer.* Yes, due to the relatively small and dispersed nature of the Coast Guard, the best opportunity to offset the costs of childcare services on Coast Guard families is through the Child Care Subsidy Program. The Coast Guard fully supports expanding this important program.

*Question.* If the Coast Guard had additional appropriations, how would the Coast Guard propose to expand the “Child Care Subsidy Program?”

*Answer.* We are grateful for the support of congress for the 2022 Appropriation which included \$4 million dollars to expand access for fee-assistance options. Additional appropriations would allow the Coast Guard to increase further funding for members in high-cost areas, increase funding for members where accredited child care is cost-prohibitive, expand school-age care and fee-assistance options, and expand access to civilian employees.

*Question.* Does the Coast Guard require authorization to expand the “Childcare Subsidy Program” to include additional types of caregivers, such as nanny shares or other forms of childcare? If so, please provide legislative recommendations.

*Answer.* Yes, the Coast Guard requires authorization to expand the Child Care Subsidy Program to include additional types of caregivers. The Coast Guard would require language similar to William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, Section 589 Pilot Program to Provide Financial Assistance to Members of the Armed Forces for In-Home Child Care. Additional resources would be required to implement a pilot program and manage requirements for in-home care.

### **Medium Icebreaker Fleet**

*Question.* Medium polar icebreakers, such as the Seattle-based USCGC HEALY (WAGB-20), are the Nation’s only platform for Arctic research which is vital for climate science and predicting impacts of climate change.

When will the Coast Guard pursue recapitalization of the Medium icebreaker fleet?

*Answer.* CGC HEALY was commissioned in 2000 with a planned service life of 30 years and is approaching its Major Maintenance Availability (MMA), which will modernize shipboard systems and perform upgrades to improve the operational reliability of the cutter. However, because CGC HEALY is already approaching the end of its designated service life, the Coast Guard is pursuing converting the planned MMA into a five-year phased Service Life Extension Project (SLEP). This project is scheduled to begin in 2026 and would be similar to the current POLAR STAR SLEP. This approach will maintain operational availability of CGC HEALY in the near term while ensuring the Service continues to provide a medium polar icebreaking capability and scientific support platform until the Nation fields a suitable replacement. The Coast Guard is in the process of examining capability gaps and statutory and operational requirements in the Arctic region that will inform long-term requirements beyond those met by the heavy polar icebreakers, which will inform the Coast Guard’s future medium polar icebreaker recapitalization strategy.

### **Southern Resident Orcas**

*Question.* Southern Resident orcas are a highly endangered species with approximately 73 individuals left in the population. Noise and disturbance from vessels is one of the three threats to the survival of this species. The U.S. Coast Guard is one of the members of the Quiet Sound initiative. As the lead Federal maritime enforcement agency, the U.S. Coast Guard’s efforts to regularly monitor vessels and ensure that they are complying with the Marine Mammal Protection Act approach regulations is critical to the continued existence of this species. Further, in the 2020 Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act, the U.S. Coast Guard was directed to submit a report and action plan in consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration related to southern resident orca vessel buffer zones. The report submitted to Congress did not address the Coast Guard’s efforts in rela-

tion to Quiet Sound, coordination with Canada, or how it was working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to reduce vessel noise on Southern resident orcas.

What are barriers the Coast Guard is facing in collaborating with other agencies and with Canada, in regard to efforts to safeguard the Southern Resident Orcas?

Answer. The Coast Guard has not experienced any significant barriers when collaborating with domestic or foreign partners in support of Southern Resident Orca (SRO) conservation efforts. The Coast Guard routinely engages with port and maritime stakeholders, like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the San Juan County Marine Resources Committee through the Quiet Sound initiative and Operation Whale Wise. The Coast Guard also works with Canadian agencies like the Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) and Transport Canada on conservation measures such as voluntary vessel slow-down zones and underwater noise reduction.

*Question.* Further, the Canadian Coast Guard has established a “Whale Desk” to alert mariners to the presence of whales so they can be avoided. What resources would the Coast Guard need to establish a similar program?

Answer. The Coast Guard is the lead Federal agency for the safety of navigation at sea. In that capacity, the Coast Guard is committed to conserving the Southern Resident Orca as a partner to other agencies, like NOAA, who are best suited to lead the Federal government’s conservation efforts. These other agencies are also best suited to establish any tools used to protect marine mammals.

The Coast Guard maintains a strong partnership with the Canadian Whale Desk. The Canadian Whale Desk is a reporting service within the Canadian Coast Guard’s MCTS, which is a component of the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) along with the Coast Guard in Puget Sound. The Coast Guard Puget Sound VTS takes whale-sighting reports from the MCTS as well as local mariners, and recommends avoidance measures to vessels near SRO sightings.

### **Tatoosh Island Lighthouse**

*Question.* The Makah Tribe has worked with the Coast Guard for years to complete necessary repairs on the Cape Flattery Lighthouse and Fog Signal Building on Tatoosh Island with the goal of transferring the property back to the Tribe. I worked to include language in the 2020 Department of Homeland Security appropriations legislation to support this ongoing work. I commend the Coast Guard for the significant preliminary improvements that have already been completed but understand that work remains to include: inadequate roof framing; power, heating, and ventilation to ensure moisture and weather readiness; environmental issues (lead paint contamination, on-site burning of building materials); and sharing of a final copy of the plans sealed by the Engineer of Record for the Tribe’s independent review.

Please provide an update on the Coast Guard’s efforts to address these outstanding issues at Tatoosh Island Lighthouse, including a funding estimate to complete repairs and facilitate the safe transfer of the property back to the Makah Tribe.

Answer. The Coast Guard allocated approximately \$2.8 million to complete stabilization efforts at Tatoosh Island Lighthouse in 2021. The intent was to minimize the effects of further weather decay to the structure, not to make the lighthouse habitable. The work included a roof replacement, a new second floor landing, new windows, new flooring in the light area itself, various structural repairs, and sealing and painting the exterior of the structure. The Coast Guard will share the final construction drawings with the Makah Tribe, however, they are not sealed by an Engineer of Record as there was no attempt to make the building habitable. No power or heating system was installed as the Coast Guard no longer uses this lighthouse as an aid to navigation.

The Coast Guard estimates the environmental cost at approximately \$1 million, but needs to conduct a survey of the site to determine the actual extent of the contamination. The Coast Guard has not yet attempted a formal transfer of the property to the Makah Tribe due to outstanding environmental liability; however, the service is very willing to do so while retaining the responsibility for the cleanup.

### **Oil Spill Response I**

*Question.* The Northwest Region and Washington State are leaders in oil spill prevention and response. The Pacific Northwest region enjoys unique biological resources, some of which are threatened, such as Southern Resident Killer Whales and salmon. The region has a sovereign co-management relationship with Treaty Tribes, and a thriving maritime economy that relies on clean water and safe oper-

ations. For many years, the region utilized a unique hybrid planning model that was developed to maintain our excellent track record of response to oil pollution. We understand that the Coast Guard has directed District 13 to separate out Captain of the Port Coastal Zone Area plans from the hybrid plan and begin having separate meetings.

What specific measures is the Coast Guard taking to ensure this shift will not negatively impact oil spill response and preparedness in the region?

Answer. The Coast Guard's focus on area contingency planning in the coastal zone is expected to improve oil spill preparedness in the Pacific Northwest. The change is part of a nationwide initiative in progress since 2017, to ensure the Coast Guard is in compliance with Federal statutes and regulations. This initiative ensures three distinct levels of planning, each with their own important role, as outlined in regulation: the National Contingency Plan, Regional Contingency Plans, and Area Contingency Plans (ACPs). Coastal zone area contingency planning is managed at the Captain of the Port (COTP) level. There are two federally designated COTP zones within Coast Guard District 13/U.S. EPA Region 10—Sector Columbia River and Sector Puget Sound. Each COTP is pre-designated as a Federal on-scene coordinator (OSC), and is "responsible for overseeing the development of the ACP in the area of the OSC's responsibility" [40 CFR § 300.120(e)]. This system of having the COTP, who is located in and familiar with the area, serves as the pre-designated OSC for incident response, and is also the individual with ultimate responsibility for contingency planning in their area of responsibility, strengthens oil spill response and preparedness in the coastal zones of Washington State and the Northwest Region.

*Question.* How will federally recognized tribal governments be formally integrated into the decision-making processes of the Coast Guard's oil spill response plans in the region?

Answer. Federally-recognized tribal governments currently are, and will continue to be, integrated into the decision-making processes of oil response planning through their participation in and membership on coastal zone Area Committee(s) under Coast Guard chairmanship. The Area Committee plays a crucial role in preparing the ACP, which is used in planning for, and responding to oil spills in that area.

## **Oil Spill Response II**

*Question.* I fought to include language in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-281) to initiate the Higher Volume Port Area ("HVPA") designation for Cape Flattery, WA to better improve Coast Guard response capabilities to oil spills in the region. However, since the designation and completion of the follow-on rulemaking, there is still a gap in Coast Guard oil spill response coverage. This is critical due to the projected increases in international vessel traffic and the introduction of the transportation of large quantities of diluted bitumen through our waterways.

Is the Coast Guard able to respond to an offshore oil spill in a timely manner, in this region, as required by law?

Answer. Yes, the response resource capability in this region meets or exceeds the Higher Volume Port Area offshore response times prescribed in law for tank and non-tank vessels. For vessels required to possess a Vessel Response Plan (VRP) approved by the Coast Guard in this region, their VRP specifies the response times of resources, and requires a means to mobilize and manage the necessary response assets to mitigate an offshore oil spill.

*Question.* What assets or resources have been moved or placed near Cape Flattery, WA for oil spill response?

(Please include a description of the evaluations the Coast Guard conducted to meet these requirements in your response.)

Answer. The nearest location of assets or resources near Cape Flattery is Neah Bay. The Oil Spill Removal Organization (OSRO) equipment in Neah Bay contains oil spill response skimming systems, containment boom, vessels, and temporary storage. Two OSROs are classified in the offshore operating environment and contain the oil spill response capability to respond to oil spills within the Puget Sound (Cape Flattery) COTP Zone. The Coast Guard evaluates these capabilities during its review of VRPs associated with the Puget Sound (Cape Flattery) COTP zone and preparedness assessment visits conducted by the Coast Guard National Strike Force Coordination Center.

## **Oil Spill Response III**

*Question.* The Makah Tribal Council hosted the first Strait of Juan de Fuca Transboundary Indigenous Caucus out of the two CANUSPAC exercises in 2016 and 2018 with an Indigenous engagement focus. The Tribe is committed to the development of this forum, which would serve as an ongoing capacity building, information

sharing, and planning forum for Tribes and First Nations in the Straits. The forum will facilitate transboundary information exchange among tribal sovereigns in the event of a spill. We recognize Tribal and First Nation participation in oil spill preparedness and response forums as improving the overall safety and quality of the response and the implementation of the Federal trust responsibility. Coast Guard recognition of this forum and integration into transboundary coordination on spill response is needed to ensure the success of this local Indigenous Caucus model. How does the Coast Guard propose to formally recognize and integrate the Indigenous Caucus into transboundary oil spill preparedness and response structures?

Answer. Concrete mechanisms exist within the Coast Guard's enactment of the Canada—United States Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) to recognize Indigenous interests and ensure their input and expertise is incorporated into JCP planning, preparedness, and response activities. One focus area involving the JCP's National Strategies includes Indigenous Caucus outreach and participation. This focus area integrates Indigenous partners in training, exercises, and operations and shares best practices regarding Indigenous relations within the JCP Annexes.

Additionally, the JCP specifically recognizes the need to meet with Indigenous representatives when coordinating responses and reiterates inclusion of affected tribes in spill response. The Coast Guard believes the Indigenous Caucus is a valuable coordination platform for oil spill preparedness and response, especially for trans-boundary spills in the Straits of Juan de Fuca. Accordingly, the caucus will be included in all relevant future training, exercises, and actual trans-boundary incidents with the Joint Response Team in the CANUSPAC region.

#### **Affordable Housing**

*Question.* Housing allowance for junior enlisted members is often insufficient, especially for high cost of living areas and rural communities where cost of living data used for B.A.H. calculations is inadequate. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated an already existing problem by causing a shortage in available housing. During unit visits, Coast Guard members often cite affordable housing as one of their main challenges.

Please describe the Coast Guard's plans to increase the availability of Coast Guard owned housing, especially at remote units and in high cost of living areas.

Answer. The Coast Guard relies on the private sector as the primary source of housing. In locations where the private sector cannot meet housing requirements, the Coast Guard provides owned or leased housing. Protecting access to quality affordable housing is especially important in remote and coastal seasonal locations where housing availability is limited and costs are prohibitive. In these locations, the Coast Guard employs a multi-pronged strategy that includes contracted regional housing market studies to assess current and future housing needs, and where validated, construction of new Coast Guard owned housing. Recent examples include new housing in Alaska, Maine, Oregon, and Puerto Rico.

The Coast Guard also leases housing in locations where the cost of rental housing exceeds member housing allowances. Additionally, the Coast Guard continues to improve Coast Guard owned housing through the utilization of the Housing Fund proceeds for projects in remote or high cost of living areas such as California, Puerto Rico, Alaska, Hawaii, and Massachusetts.

The Coast Guard remains dedicated to ensuring that the workforce is well-informed on the available benefits and tools to assist with their housing needs. These efforts were paramount during the 2021 transfer season, when housing costs were high and members experienced difficulty locating affordable rental housing. As part of the Coast Guard's communication strategy, housing officers completed one-on-one contact with all inbound personnel to ensure their housing needs were addressed prior to arriving at their new duty station.

#### **Housing Cost Estimates**

*Question.* District personnel have tools under current B.A.H. procedures to address some challenges in ensuring accurate assessment of housing costs. However, those tools are not used consistently over time, or across districts.

Has the Coast Guard identified best practices to improve accuracy of housing cost estimates?

Answer. A best practice to improve the accuracy of housing cost estimates is for the designated Military Housing Offices (MHO) to utilize the tools and training in executing the data collection process and contact the Regional or Service Representative for service-specific questions or data collection issues. The Tools and the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) Data Collection Process Guide are available online and training is held annually for the MHOs. MHO's are also encouraged to contact the Regional or Service Representative in addition to contacting the BAH Contractor

(RDN) Customer Service Manager for Military Housing Areas specific questions or concerns.

In circumstances where the MHO is not a Coast Guard representative, the local CG command is encouraged to engage and communicate frequently with the designated MHOs to ensure Coast Guard's interests are understood.

*Question.* If so, how are those best practices shared and implemented across districts?

*Answer.* All Coast Guard MHOs are aware of the tools and training. The MHO portal, the tool that ensures accurate assessment of (rental) housing costs, is accessible to the designated MHO from each Service. All announcements related to the year-long BAH rate setting process or data collection issues are sent by e-mail from RDN to all the Service MHOs, Regional Users, and Service representatives.

Unfortunately, the establishment of relationships with non-Coast Guard MHOs and currency with training is not consistently employed across the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is currently developing guidance for the improved utilization of best practices for eventual distribution and standardization across all districts.

#### **Hazard Pay Information**

*Question.* In the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 (P.L. 114–120) I fought for Coast Guard members to receive benefits for disabilities sustained in the line of duty. Despite the expansion of the Combat Related Special Compensation program being enacted over half a decade ago, we still hear from Coast Guard members in hazardous lines of work who are not familiar with the benefits they are entitled to receive for serving our Nation.

The Coast Guard has incorporated Combat Related Special Compensation in some trainings, but clearly the Coast Guard actions to date are insufficient. What other steps will the Coast Guard take to ensure members that may be eligible for Combat Related Special Compensation benefits receive that information early and often in their careers?

*Answer.* The Coast Guard currently and actively trains its members on the topic of their Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) benefits as part of the regular curriculum of its, and the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD), Transition Assistance Program (TAP). All Coast Guard members are required to complete a TAP course prior to separation or retirement. Additionally, information is readily available on the Internet via any open-source search engine that direct users to dedicated webpages provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, DoD, as well as the Coast Guard itself. A specific and dedicated informational trifold on CRSC is also available at every Coast Guard clinic and regional practice site. Lastly, every member proceeding through physical disability evaluation is supplied CRSC information upon entry and exit of the process, and the Coast Guard's ultimate decision document, which includes a specific CRSC finding and follow-on instructions, must be signed by the member before being made a permanent entry in their official military record. As evidenced by this multi-layered approach, the Coast Guard deeply values the CRSC program and its member benefits.

#### **Remote Location Healthcare**

*Question.* Coast Guard members and their families deserve the best healthcare available for the hardships and dislocations they endure in the service of our Nation. Receiving quality healthcare is at best, challenging for members stationed in remote units such as Gray's Harbor and Cape Disappointment, WA. Members and families need to drive for hours to receive care from specialists or even to get a routine dental exam. This is not only a disruption for the member's day but also a readiness issue to those commands with members of their limited crews unavailable for one or more workdays. The drives can also pose a safety issue on remote roads.

What additional resources does the Coast Guard need to reduce the healthcare burden on members and families serving in remote locations?

*Answer.* The most important area of support for Coast Guard members and dependents in remote locations remains within civilian sector care under the Defense Health Agency (DHA) TRICARE network. Coast Guard works directly with DHA to increase network providers, but DHA holds the managed care support contracts. Closer examination of the reasons why providers are not participating, or choose not to accept new patients, is a key area that is not visible to Coast Guard. At this time the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is conducting a specific study related to TRICARE's ability to support the Coast Guard. GAO's findings in this report may provide additional information that clarifies existing obstacles and outlines potential changes to improve access to care.

*Question.* Does the current Coast Guard IT system, staffing, and healthcare model support the use of telemedicine to include behavioral health consultations?

Answer. Yes, the Coast Guard implemented a telemedicine solution during the COVID-19 pandemic and maintains that capability.

*Question.* What can Congress do to help expand or improve access to telemedicine in the Coast Guard?

Answer. Telemedicine as part of the TRICARE entitlement for both active duty and families is a significant source of Coast Guard health care. Ensuring that telemedicine remains an entitlement with no or low copayments is one tool to increase use from beneficiaries' long-term.

---

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TAMMY BALDWIN TO  
KARL L. SCHULTZ

### **Navigation Protocols**

*Question.* The threat posed to the Great Lakes by invasive species, particularly invasive Asian Carp, is significant. The proper implementation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) and its Brandon Road project is critical to protecting the region from severe ecological impacts, but before that is implemented, the operation of the electric dispersal barriers are critical to preventing the upstream transfer of individual carp. Scientists estimate that as few as 20 breeding pairs of invasive carp could establish a viable population, fundamentally changing the ecology of the lakes. Congress has made clear that the Coast Guard, through its role in the interagency Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee process, shares responsibility for the development, implementation, and enforcement of navigation protocols to prevent entrainment of invasive species as vessels move through the Chicago Area Waterway System. What is the status of the development and implementation of navigation protocols on the Chicago Area Waterway System to prevent the entrainment of invasive carp?

Answer. Current navigation protocols are established under 33 CFR § 165.923 for all waters of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, Romeoville, IL located between mile marker 295.5 and mile marker 297.2. This regulation includes a provision that restricts the discharge of non-potable water from vessels unless testing has demonstrated that the non-potable water does not contain potential live Silver or Asian carp, viable eggs, or gametes.

In addition, Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ICRCC) agencies are evaluating the use of bubbler arrays and other technologies to prevent inadvertent entrainment and transport of small fish through locks and electric barriers by commercial barges. In 2022, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and partnering agencies will field test the efficacy of bubbles in removing small invasive carp from the rake-box junction of commercial barges in the Illinois Waterway. Results of this project will also help to address known vulnerabilities at the Chicago Area Waterway System electrical barriers and assist in design of deterrents at Brandon Road Lock and Dam. The USACE will also explore testing the interactions of multiple deterrent technologies to optimize their effectiveness and minimize possible negative interference between technologies.

*Question.* Please provide the projected timeline for full implementation of navigation protocols.

Answer. Development, assessment, and implementation of additional navigation safety protocols is contingent upon completion of the experimental field testing of longitudinal bubbler arrays for barge entrainment mitigation currently underway by USACE and USFWS in collaboration with the USGS.

*Question.* Please provide a detailed explanation of the navigation protocols to be implemented?

Answer. Any new navigation protocols and restrictions in the Chicago Area Waterway System that result from this ongoing research would be similar to the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal near Romeoville, Illinois under 33 CFR § 165.923.

*Question.* Please provide the status and details of the Coast Guard's enforcement plan to ensure vessel compliance with the navigation protocols.

Answer. Once safety protocols are formally established, the ICRCC agencies will conduct education and outreach activities to inform the public. The Coast Guard will verify compliance and enforce the navigation protocols during routine vessel boardings and inspections.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH TO  
KARL L. SCHULTZ

### **Indo-Pacific Operations**

*Question.* Economic growth in Asia continues to re-shape our strategic landscape as the world's economic and political center of gravity shifts towards the Indo-Pacific. The Coast Guard's status as a military service coupled with its law enforcement roles allows it to contribute to both the military and maritime law enforcement requirements of the Indo-Pacific region.

How have the Coast Guard's international partnerships strengthened our Nation's readiness to engage in great power competition in the Indo-Pacific region?

*Answer.* The Coast Guard has been operating in the Indo-Pacific with our key partners for over 150 years, and is proud to be considered a trusted partner in the region's maritime security, safety and stewardship. The Coast Guard's operations, activities and investments in the region, informed by national-level strategic guidance, are designed to shape the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multi-national maritime environment, to ensure unrestricted, lawful access to the region's maritime commons. The cornerstone of these efforts is Coast Guard operational engagements which promotes regional security cooperation and capacity building that enables our Indo-Pacific partners capacity to establish effective maritime governance and sovereignty.

*Question.* What can Congress do to empower the Coast Guard to expand its presence and operations in the Indo-Pacific region?

*Answer.* With a goal of a free, open, and resilient Indo-Pacific, the Coast Guard's operations, activities, and investments (OAI) in the region are designed to ensure economic prosperity, environmental resiliency, and unrestricted lawful access to the region's maritime commons. This shaping takes place by strengthening allies and partnerships via three primary lines of effort around which OAI are organized; increased presence, maritime governance, and meaningful engagements. Increased resourcing is required in the form of sustained, predictable growth to Coast Guard operational funding levels to address overall Service readiness, and expand Coast Guard OAIs across the Indo-Pacific. With increased resourcing, the Coast Guard would realize a greater long-term vision to support National Security Strategy objectives, and achieve comprehensive strategic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.

### **ATON Fleet Maintenance**

*Question.* According to a 2020 GAO report, the Coast Guard faces challenges with managing its fixed and floating aids to navigation (ATON). One challenge specifically is the decreased availability of vessels to service ATON due to unplanned maintenance periods. Older ATON cutters can take longer to repair because of old or obsolete equipment and the lack of available parts, which decreases their availability to conduct missions.

What is the Coast Guard doing to expedite the procurement process for equipment needed to reduce unplanned maintenance periods for the ATON cutter fleet?

*Answer.* The Coast Guard is addressing aids to navigation (ATON) cutter fleet challenges through a multi-faceted approach ranging from standard system and equipment obsolescence replacements, to major maintenance projects. The 225' WLB Seagoing Buoy Tender fleet is nearing completion of its MMA program, which includes replacement of several obsolete systems, and provides needed maintenance to critical ship systems. The 175' WLM Coastal Buoy tender fleet is scheduled to undergo MMA starting in Fiscal Year 2024, pending funding approval in FY 2022. While neither MMA program is intended to add service life, these crucial maintenance programs modernize systems, and are targeted to increase reliability and reduce unplanned maintenance.

In regards to the inland river and construction tender fleet, the Coast Guard stood up the Inland River Emergency Subsystem Sustainment to address subsystem obsolescence issues. The Coast Guard continues to utilize industry best practices to identify, schedule, and prioritize maintenance, and repair work to reduce unplanned maintenance delays with available budget and resources. This sustainment strategy will continue until the replacement of targeted ATON cutter classes through the Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC) acquisition program is complete. Contract award for the River Buoy Tender and Construction Tender variants of the WCC is anticipated in the second quarter of FY 2022. The first WCCs are scheduled for delivery in FY 2025, pending contract award.

### **Countering Extremism**

*Question.* Domestic terrorism incidents have soared to new highs in the United States, driven primarily by white-supremacist, anti-Muslim and anti-government ex-

tremists. Earlier this year, the Secretary of Defense announced immediate actions to counter extremism in the military and established the Countering Extremism Working Group. This working group was established because servicemembers cannot contribute to a cohesive unit if extremist views prevent different members from working together.

In addition to holding an extremism stand-down, what has the Coast Guard done to prevent, detect and address extremist views within the organization?

Answer. In 2013, the Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) created the CGIS Threat Management Unit (TMU), a full-time dedicated behavioral analysis, behavioral threat assessment, and threat management capability to help commands and the Coast Guard identify, assess, and manage, concerning, aberrant, and violent behavior, to include violent extremism.

- TMU provides customized behavior-based products and services to support commands and CGIS special agents during the interviewing and investigation of potential acts of concern and to reduce potential escalation of unwanted outcomes.
- In FY 2021, CGIS leadership doubled the number of the TMU special agent threat assessors and maintains a contract with a clinical forensic psychologist with specialization in targeted violence and radicalization.

In 2009, the USCG established its Insider Threat capability. Today, the CG's Insider Threat Program (CGInTP) works to detect, deter, and mitigate insider threats; supports the lawful interests of stakeholders; aids in the protection of USCG installations, information, equipment and personnel. CGInTP is comprised of 23 full-time insider threat professionals who specialize in acquiring, analyzing, and providing indications and warnings of potential insider threats.

- On November 12, 2018, the USCG Insider Threat Program detected self-described skinhead Christopher P. Hasson and uncovered his domestic terrorism plot along with his white supremacist beliefs, which—in part—fueled his efforts. The combined efforts of the CGInTP, the Coast Guard Investigative Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation interrupted Hasson's planning after a 3 month investigation and resulted in his criminal conviction and 13.3 year prison sentence.
- Since then, the CGInTP has been presenting lessons learned from the Hasson case and the results of the USCG's extremism detection analysis throughout the DoD, DHS, and Intelligence Community.
- In 2019, the CGInTP instantiated a nascent extremism detection analytical process based on User Activity Monitoring data accumulated for insider threat detection. To date, CGInTP has evaluated approximately 1.5 million extremism related data artifacts from approximately 4,000 individuals, which resulted in 10 referrals to CGIS.
- In 2020, CGInTP agreed to partner with the Pentagon and the United States Military Academy to create a domestic terrorism-themed educational module aimed at education of junior military officers.
- In 2021, CGInTP began participating in DHS and Coast Guard efforts to address extremism in organizational policy and as a cross-cutting topic that would include insider threat program capabilities.
- In 2021, CGInTP began assisting a Federally Funded Research and Development Center with studying extremism and evaluating future detection capabilities.
- From 2019 through 2021, CGInTP has participated in virtual town halls, podcasts, been featured on Twitter, and supported the private sector as subject matter experts for panel discussions on the topic of Insider Threat.

Coast Guard personnel participated in the Secretary of Defense's Countering Extremist Activities Working Group tasked with updating and expanding DoD regulations to address extremist activity among members of the Armed Forces. This led to the December 20, 2021, update to DoD Instruction 1325.06, which applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Military Departments to include the Coast Guard.

In October 2021, the Coast Guard stood up a "Confronting and Eliminating Extremism" Community of Interest. The group meets regularly and serves as the Initial Operating Capability and central coordination and collaboration body to address Coast Guard efforts to counter extremism within the Service.

### Leased Housing

*Question.* Coast Guard members and their families have been facing difficulties as they move to new duty stations due to surging housing costs. This year alone, the national median rent increased by 11.4 percent causing members to pay more per month for rentals than their housing allowance covers. This is especially true in areas where families compete with tourism and the growth of online homestay services.

What steps has the Coast Guard taken to expand the supply of Family Leased Housing and Unaccompanied Personnel Leased Housing?

*Answer.* The Coast Guard provides family and unaccompanied leased housing as necessary to address the housing needs of our members. This typically occurs in locations where there is insufficient Coast Guard owned housing or private sector housing, or the cost of private sector housing exceeds the housing allowance. The Coast Guard does not have a cap for the total quantity of leased housing, and the program is a viable housing option in the absence of Coast Guard owned or private sector housing. It is also a cost effective option in locations where the cost of leased housing is less than owning and maintaining a small number of Coast Guard owned housing units. With the exception of single junior members assigned afloat, who are by statute not entitled to basic allowance for housing, assignment to Coast Guard leased housing is optional. While current Coast Guard policy does not allow the long-term retention of vacant leased housing, policy exceptions are considered and approved on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the totality of circumstances.

### Female-Relevant Policies

*Question.* The 2019 RAND report on Improving Gender Diversity in the Coast Guard highlighted concerns that women faced regarding the lack of breastfeeding support following parental leave. In particular, key issues stemmed from inconsistencies in the implementation of female-relevant policies across Coast Guard units, including appropriate lactation facilities and adequate time for lactation breaks.

What is the Coast Guard doing to educate its leadership specifically on female-relevant policies?

*Answer.* The Coast Guard Personnel Readiness Task Force created a draft resource guide for unit leaders and personnel. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is working to finalize the product. The Coast Guard anticipates this resource being ready for leadership beginning in March 2022.

The Coast Guard released a Coast Guard-wide article that highlighted policies that have significantly impacted women's retention, Women's retention rates increasing > United States Coast Guard > My Coast Guard News (uscg.mil), an article specifically detailing how to support lactation Supervisors: How to support breastfeeding in the field > United States Coast Guard > My Coast Guard News (uscg.mil), and the Pregnancy in the Coast Guard guide in 2019.

*Question.* Are all Coast Guard facilities currently outfitted to ensure proper lactation accommodations are available to nursing mothers returning to work?

*Answer.* Coast Guard policy requires a Nursing Mothers Room (NMR) for units/offices greater than 50 people.

The Coast Guard does not have specific data on availability of lactation accommodations at all of its shore facilities. The Coast Guard includes NMRs into building designs when executing major construction activities.

*Question.* If not, what is the Coast Guard's plan to foster more inclusive work environments for female personnel?

*Answer.* The Coast Guard created guidance to commands to foster an inclusive work environment for nursing members. Paragraph d. (2)(a) and d.(2)(b) of Commandant Instruction 1000.9, Pregnancy In the Coast Guard, read: ". . . Challenges in the workplace may include lack of adequate facilities and limited time during the workday for expressing milk. These challenges can be reduced with a small investment of time and flexibility. When possible, the commanding officers and officers in charge should support service members who desire to breastfeed as follows: (1) lactation facility: Ensure the availability of a private, clean room for expressing breast milk during the workday. When space is limited, a multi-purpose room (*i.e.*, duty room), stateroom, or berthing area may be used as long as privacy can be assured for the time required. The facility shall be as close as possible to a water source for washing hands and rinsing equipment and equipped with electrical outlets, a table and chair. It is preferable that this space not be a restroom unless the restroom is equipped with a lounge type of area . . ."

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TED CRUZ TO  
KARL L. SCHULTZ

*Background:* Currently, there are unprecedented delays at American ports, which have led to staggering images of dozens and dozens of ships waiting off the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to unload. These delays have had tremendous negative downstream impacts for American businesses and consumers, and have led to ships anchoring in places they normally would not.

*Question 1.* Given the role the Coast Guard plays in safeguarding vessel traffic, what impact is the unprecedented backlog of ships at ports around the United States having on Coast Guard operations?

Answer. The backlog has had a minimal impact on Coast Guard operations. Coast Guard Captains of the Port (COTP) leverage their unique authorities to effectively manage traffic throughout American ports and cooperate closely with port partners to maintain maritime domain awareness, manage risk resulting from port congestion, and minimize its impact to Coast Guard operations.

- *Follow-up:* Does the Coast Guard have to divert resources from its other missions—like drug and migrant interdiction—to U.S. ports in order to be able to continue to meet its maritime safety and security and marine environmental protection missions at and around those ports?

Answer. The Coast Guard has not diverted resources to account for port congestion and continues to perform all 11 of its statutory missions.

*Question 2.* Is the backlog of ships at ports around the United States forcing waiting ships to anchor in places they normally wouldn't, such as close to or over under-sea pipelines?

Answer. Each COTP uses their authority to identify anchorage areas, as well as areas where anchoring is prohibited. The COTP can and will direct vessels at anchor to move, if their anchorage threatens the safety of navigation or the environment. Additionally, COTPs enforce vessel entry delays to prevent unsafe crowding of navigational channels and anchorages.

- *Follow-up:* Specifically, did the backlog at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach play any role in the MSC DANIT incident off the Port of Long Beach in early October, which led to the puncturing of an undersea oil pipeline?

If so, please give specifics.

Answer. The Coast Guard, in conjunction with the National Transportation Safety Board, is conducting an ongoing investigation into the Pipeline P00547 Incident which occurred off the Port of Long Beach. The Coast Guard will share results of that investigation once they become available.

*Background:* In a Commerce Committee hearing on December 8, 2020, regarding U.S. Coast Guard capabilities for safeguarding national interests, USCG Vice Commandant, Admiral Charles Ray, and I discussed the threat that China and Russia pose to American interests in the Arctic. He stated that, although Russia is an immediate challenge in the Arctic, with regard to China:

*"The behavior [China] is displaying in the polar regions—not just the Arctic but the Antarctic, and not just the Alaska Arctic but over by Greenland as well . . . They are . . . following, in my opinion and analysis I've done . . . the same playbook they followed in the South China Sea . . . get a toehold and then start working in the name of science and in the name of other things, then the next thing you know they are moving forward their agenda there."*

It is well known that China has constructed airstrips, created deep draft ports, deployed anti-ship cruise missiles, surface-to-air missiles, and missile defense batteries, and conducted various drills and tests, such as the 2019 tests of anti-ship ballistic missiles, designed to showcase the Chinese military's growing counter-inter-vention capabilities and deter the United States and our allies. On October 18, 2021, White House Press Secretary Jenn Psaki said, regarding China's recent, publicly reported successful test of a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile, that the Administration "welcome[s] stiff competition" with China.

*Question 3.* What is the Coast Guard's analysis of China's activity in the Arctic and Antarctic and their efforts, as Admiral Ray stated, to get a toehold there? If necessary you may submit an additional, classified answer, but please provide an unclassified analysis as well.

Answer. (U//FOUO) Historical analysis by the Coast Guard's Intelligence Coordination Center (ICC) demonstrates the PRC's pattern of advancing broader state interests after establishing entry via benign means, such as scientific research. This

pattern is well-demonstrated globally, and extends into the Polar Regions. Additional details on the PRC's activities and interests are classified and will be made available separately via appropriate classified system.

*Question 4.* Concerning their activity in the Arctic and Antarctic and efforts to get a toehold there, is it the position of the Coast Guard that it welcomes "stiff competition" with China?

Answer. (U//FOUO) The actions and intentions of Arctic and non-Arctic nation states continue to shape the security environment and stability of the region. Allies, partners, and competitors increasingly contend for diplomatic, economic, and strategic advantage and influence. The PRC has declared the Arctic a strategic priority and is exerting direct or indirect influence across the region. This prioritization includes pursuit of economic investments in key strategic areas such as rare-earth elements, oil and gas development, air and sea ports, railways, and infrastructure. In 2019, the PRC launched its first domestically-built icebreaking vessel, the Research Vessel XUE LONG 2, which operated in the Arctic this year, including taking a sediment core sample while operating on the waters over the United States' extended continental shelf. The PRC is also designing an even more powerful polar icebreaker expected to have twice the icebreaking capability of XUE LONG 2. With continued effort and investment, the PRC could outpace U.S. icebreaker capacity and polar access by 2024. The Coast Guard's primary concern with PRC activities in the Arctic is their potential to disrupt the cooperation, stability, and governance in the region for both Arctic and non-Arctic States. This concern stems from their pattern of behavior in other parts of the globe, and their willingness to push the boundaries of acceptable behavior to advance their interests.

(U//FOUO) The PRC is a full and active member of the Antarctic Treaty system. The PRC has a small but growing presence in Antarctica, including the aforementioned icebreaking capacity. The United States closely monitors the capabilities and intentions of all countries active in Antarctica to safeguard U.S. national interests in Antarctica. As part of this interagency effort, the USCGC Polar Star was instrumental in conducting an unannounced inspection of a PRC station in the Ross Sea region in February 2020.

(U) The Coast Guard has shaped and influenced national security in the Arctic for over 150 years. This includes asserting the Nation's sovereign rights, upholding our sovereign responsibilities from the strategic to the tactical level, and countering malign influence that is contrary to U.S. values and international rules and norms. The Service will continue to be present and lead, both operationally and strategically, so that the Nation can monitor and modify the behavior of our strategic competitors and enable the U.S. to expand influence across the Arctic through collaboration based on shared values with allies and partners.

*Background:* As the rapid militarization of the South China Sea has shown, if China is allowed to establish a significant presence in the increasingly contested Arctic region under the guise of something innocuous, it won't be long before they militarize that presence and begin threatening the territory of the U.S. and our economic interests.

*Question 5.* What resources does the Coast Guard need to effectively defend our maritime and economic security, and truly assert American power and deter incursions from China in the Arctic?

Answer. Competition in the Arctic is growing, and for more than 150 years, our Nation has counted on the Coast Guard to proudly project American sovereignty, provide national security, and promote economic prosperity in the region. Exercising leadership in the Arctic requires effective presence. As the only U.S. military service that operates consistently on the surface in the high-latitudes, the Coast Guard is well positioned to play a crucial role in protecting our Nation's interests in a vital region being sought for economic gains and militarized by the PRC.

As human activity and international interest in the Polar Regions expands, the Coast Guard appreciates continued Congressional support for the Coast Guard's highest acquisition priorities, including the Polar Security Cutter (PSC). Providing the funding included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 President's Budget is critical to this acquisition effort. When fully operational, PSCs will provide the global reach and Polar icebreaking capability necessary to ensure sustained operations in the Polar Regions, providing access that is critical to protecting our national interests and security.

Moreover, the Coast Guard's FY 2022 Unfunded Priority List includes funding for operational capabilities and logistical imperatives that allow the Coast Guard to uphold a rules-based order by conducting effective maritime operations and exercises throughout the region. Operational capabilities include a commercial icebreaker bridging strategy and MH-60T helicopter blade-fold/tail-fold capabilities while

logistical imperatives include personnel housing in Kodiak, AK and industrial facility improvements in Ketchikan, AK.

*Background:* In your testimony, you discussed the global problem that is Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. One Texas-specific IUU issue is that of Mexican lanchas, which routinely violate the maritime boundary separating Mexico and the United States and engage in illegal fishing and, increasingly, other illicit activities. These lanchas—small, crude fishing boats outfitted with powerful outboard motors—illegally cross into U.S. waters to catch high-priced red snapper using fishing equipment, which is illegal in the United States due to the indiscriminate way it kills not just sought after fish, but protected species like turtles, dolphins, and sharks. Today, this illegal fishing by Mexican lanchas has become a multi-million dollar black market even involving the Mexican drug cartels. When Mexican fishermen are caught illegally fishing, their boats and catch are confiscated, but the fisherman are simply returned to Mexico. The Mexican lanchas not only disrupt the American fishing industry and marine ecosystem, but also actually help fuel transnational crime and provide financial support for the cartels through the trafficking of drugs and people.

*Question 6.* What additional resources—ships, aerial assets, manpower, etc.—does the Coast Guard need to combat the Mexican lanchas and effectively put an end to this lawless behavior? Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Lancha incursions into the U.S. Exclusive Economic zone and subsequent illegal fishing in U.S. waters by Mexican Nations is a long standing and complex challenge. The economic drivers for this illicit activity are multi-faceted. Increases in resources, ships, aerial assets, and manpower would likely increase the number of lancha interdictions. Increased interdiction efforts alone are assessed as unlikely to significantly decrease the number of lancha incursions absent changes in economic drivers in Mexico.

*Question 7.* Outside of physical resources, are changes to statute needed to penalize effectively the pilots and crew of lanchas who are caught illegally crossing into U.S. waters and raiding American fisheries? If so, please be specific concerning changes to criminal law, economic sanctions, etc.

Answer. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing is a complex issue that requires a whole of government effort to address. Current statutes provide a robust legal framework for addressing illegal fishing in U.S. waters. The underlying economic drivers of this activity are perhaps the most difficult challenge, and the Mexican government has the greatest ability to affect those factors.

---

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. DAN SULLIVAN TO  
KARL L. SCHULTZ

*Background:* Alaska relies heavily on Alternate Planning Criteria in lieu of the National Planning Criteria when determining appropriate vessel response plans. Many complaints revolve around the APC program, including many shortfalls that could spell disaster if a modern day Exxon Valdez were to occur. Through the 2018 Coast Guard bill, the GAO completed a report in September 2020 highlighting some of the issues. The Coast Guard responded by standing up the Maritime Oil-Spill Response Planning Advisory Group. They have since decided that the solution is to improve the internal paperwork process. After holding a two-day info-session in Alaska, it became apparent that the Coast Guard is not interested in outside opinions or support on this topic.

*Question 1.* Can you explain the Coast Guard's hesitancy to involve state and local agencies in the Vessel Response Plan (VRP) review and development process or to consult industry on ways to improve the Alternate Planning Criteria (APC) system?

Answer. The Coast Guard shares your concerns about oil-spill response resource capabilities and planning gaps in Alaska, and continually seeks way to improve our Vessel Response Plan (VRP) review processes and to clarify Alternate Planning Criteria guidelines. The members of the Maritime Oil-Spill Response Plan Advisory Group (MORPAG) actively engage with federal, state and local agencies in Alaska to address these complex issues through mechanisms like the Western Alaska Area Committee and the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force. Furthermore, the MORPAG solicited feedback from the various state, local, industry, and Federal stakeholders that attended its most recent meetings in Alaska, and will incorporate this feedback, as possible, to improve remote-area vessel response planning.

*Question 2.* This is an area I care very much about as the management of the oil spill response program is challenging and diverse in D17. I am disappointed in

what I perceive as a lack of effort from the Coast Guard on this subject. What is it going to take to see real progress regarding APCs in Alaska? What does congress need to do?

Answer. The Coast Guard also cares deeply about developing common sense vessel response planning policy to protect all of our Nation's coastlines from the threat of oil pollution. To improve remote area vessel response planning, the MORPAG established a deliberate and phased project management approach to develop sound policies, as recommended by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Per this phased approach, the Coast Guard, via the MORPAG, continues to address stakeholder equities and formulate well-informed solutions to improve the VRP program while facilitating alternatives and build-out of response infrastructure in remote areas. The Coast Guard expects to publish these solutions in 2022.

*Background:* The Coast Guard's Rescue 21 distress communication system only covers a fraction of Alaska's coastline while coastal states in the lower 48 have complete coverage of their shoreline. The Alaska system pales in comparison by not providing lines of bearing to distress calls, instead only providing large range rings that may cover thousands of square miles. This system in Alaska has not been meeting the Coast Guard's reliability standards with numerous radio towers routinely non-operational across the state. Meaning boaters cannot call out to the Coast Guard for help on VHF Channel 16 in large areas.

*Question 3.* I am very pleased to see the Coast Guard taking action to make substantial improvements to the equipment at many of the radio tower sites. In previous hearings, the Coast Guard has stated they would be working with DHS Science and Technology, as well as the Arctic Domain Awareness Center to study high latitude maritime connectivity mission needs, the use of satellites to conduct VHF communications, and the recapitalization of HF abilities in the Arctic. Can you provide an update on what these studies have produced and how Congress can aid in the implementation of these findings?

Answer. Both the Arctic Domain Awareness Center and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate studies are ongoing. The Coast Guard anticipates updates from both studies in the second quarter of FY 2022.

*Question 5.* Despite being a highly utilized waterway, a large portion of Cook Inlet near the Kenai River is in a massive VHF dead spot. Can you explain why the Coast Guard does not have VHF coverage in this area and what is needed to rectify this issue?

Answer. The acquisition methodology used to deploy the Rescue 21 (R21) capability to Alaska from FY 2005 to FY 2017 was "build to cost" since the acquisition cost for full coverage exceeded the resources available to the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard prioritized 68 sites in Alaska based on historical search and rescue case data to provide coverage until funds were exhausted. Funds were exhausted before the coverage could be provided to Cook Inlet and other areas.

The Coast Guard remains committed to modernizing the footprint of the R21 Alaska system to provide more reliable and resilient search and rescue services. The Coast Guard does not have immediate plans to expand coverage for R21 Alaska beyond the original acquisition footprint [expanding to ensure full coverage will be an important consideration for the next generation system] because any further development of the current R21 Alaska system would constitute a new acquisition program that must comply with the DHS Joint Requirements Integration Management System.

The Coast Guard has commenced preliminary steps to address this problem through a next generation system. The Coast Guard is documenting its requirements and assessing potential technology solutions that will inform in Rough Order of Magnitude estimates for a future acquisition. Additional funding will be required to expand the coverage area for R21 Alaska beyond the original footprint.

---

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN TO  
KARL L. SCHULTZ

*Question 1.* As a Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) member, I am closely tracking Department of Defense (DOD) COVID-19 Vaccine mandates, timelines, and disposition guidance with respect to refusals. Does the Coast Guard have a more or less restrictive policy than the broader Department of Homeland Security?

Answer. Both DHS and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) have policies which indicate that everyone shall be vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they have been granted an exemption. For military members of the USCG, the personnel consequences of

disobeying a lawful general order differ from the consequences which could be faced by civilian personnel, whether employed by DHS or USCG.

*Question 2.* Can you provided details on what would be the least favorable discharge and characterization of service a Coast Guardsman can receive for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine?

Answer. The characterization of this discharge will be no less than General under Honorable Conditions.

*Question 3.* What is the Coast Guard's authoritative document regarding the vaccination requirements, timelines, and exemption procedures for civilian personnel? Please include references for both contractors and GS employees.

Answer. In e-mails sent on October 12, 2021, October 25, 2021, and November 8, 2021; the DHS Under Secretary for Management outlined the requirements and consequences associated with President Biden's September 9, 2021 Executive Order (EO) on Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees. The information provided mandates all Federal employees to be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021 except in limited circumstances in which an employee requests or receives a legally required exception.

*Question 4.* Secretary Austin Lunched an "Independent Review Commission" on sexual assault in the military as one of his first acts as the Secretary of Defense. He claims that he "consulted with all services." Did the Secretary Austin's "Independent Review Commission" consult the Coast Guard?

Answer. Yes. The "Independent Review Commission (IRC)" met with the Judge Advocate General of the Coast Guard in a joint meeting with the Judge Advocate Generals of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In addition, a senior Coast Guard judge advocate was included as a member of the Consultative Team assigned to support the IRC Accountability Line of Effort Highly Qualified Experts.

*Question 5.* Is it correct that while the Coast Guard is administered under Title 14 of the United States Code when not operating as part of the U.S. Navy, individuals commissioned or enlisted in the Coast Guard are subject to the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) as an Armed Force?

Answer. Yes. Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 101 and 14 U.S.C. § 101, the Coast Guard is a military service and a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States at all times.

*Question 6.* Will any efforts to reform, modify, or otherwise procedurally shake up the UCMJ have a direct impact on the Coast Guard?

Answer. Coast Guard officers and enlisted members are subject to the UCMJ pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 802 (Article 2), and the Coast Guard is part of the military justice system as implemented in the Manual for Courts-Martial (MCM) (2019 ed).

*Question 7.* Every service chief was provided an opportunity to submit a closed letter to the SASC, detailing their assessment of the efficacy of Military Justice Improvement and Increasing Prevention Act (MJIIP). All of them raised serious concerns with this legislation and cautioned against its passage. What is your position on removing the consideration of sexual assault and harassment from the chain of command?

Answer. The Commander occupies a unique and central role and has primary responsibility to maintain good order and discipline, to foster an environment and culture of respect, and to engender trust amongst all members of the command, conditions which contribute to unit cohesion and military effectiveness in combat and in other dangerous operations. The IRC recognized that preventing, responding to, and supporting Service members who are the victims of sexual harassment and sexual assault is a command responsibility. This responsibility is inextricably linked to, and depends on, the authority to command effectively. This responsibility remains in tact and just as important as before the new changes to military justice.

The Coast Guard will support and implement removal of the prosecution of sexual assault and certain crimes from the chain of command and vesting it in independent authorities within the Service, in accordance with the new law.

*Question 8.* Do you believe that over the course of the next 2-4 years, this notion of removing the referral of charges to courts martial by military prosecutors instead of commanders will decreased rates of sexual assault in the Coast Guard?

Answer. Sexual assault is not unique to the Coast Guard—the scourge of sexual assault plagues the military and society, alike. The Coast Guard believes the best way to decrease the rates of sexual assault is to increase prevention resources and develop new strategies to create cultural change within the Service. Seeking to prevent sexual assaults before they occur is the most effective strategy for decreasing the overall rate of sexual assault.

Prevention goes hand in hand with accountability. The Coast Guard will faithfully implement the changes in military justice responses to sexual assault and related crimes, as required by the new law.

---

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TODD YOUNG TO  
KARL L. SCHULTZ

*Background:* Over time, the Coast Guard has changed its domestic icebreaking policy to prioritize maritime deliveries of food and fuel over industrial supplies. The number of Coast Guard icebreaking cutters in the Great Lakes has declined from 14 to 9. While that prioritization of “Tier One” waterway commerce might be appropriate for northeastern states, in the Great Lakes, the vast majority of food and fuel is delivered by landside transportation, not vessels. Instead, it is the Great Lakes steel manufacturing industry depends on adequate winter icebreaking to facilitate delivery of raw materials, and this icebreaking is needed in more areas than just the four Great Lakes connecting channels the Coast Guard considers “Tier One.”

*Question 1.* Will you revisit the Coast Guard’s domestic icebreaking policy so that it more appropriately considers the different maritime commerce needs of the different regions of the country?

Answer. The Coast Guard is currently updating its Domestic Icebreaking Operations Policy, COMDTINST 16151.1D. The Coast Guard will carefully consider the needs of all waterways users during the revision process. The Coast Guard expects to complete the revision process by early Calendar Year 2023.

*Background:* In 2019, you laid out your vision for expanding the Coast Guard’s presence in the Indo-Pacific, which was built upon the use of short cutter deployments to provide unique capabilities to our partners in the region. In the years since, that mission has evolved into a forward presence based in Guam. This year, three cutters are based in Guam and providing a continuous presence as the United States competes in the maritime domain against China’s extensive coast guard and fishing fleet.

*Question 2.* How has this deployment been matched by investments in shore infrastructure to support these deployments?

Answer. The Coast Guard is building shore infrastructure in Apra Harbor, Guam to support Coast Guard priorities in the Indo-Pacific region including the homeport facilities for three 154-foot Fast Response Cutters (FRCs). The FRCs arrived prior to the completion of the infrastructure needed for their long-term support, but the scope of the infrastructure project includes waterside wharf upgrades, construction of a Maintenance and Weapons Depot and Support building, a HAZMAT storage building, ammunition and pyrotechnics lockers, and associated infrastructure. The project is on track to be completed in the third quarter of FY 2022.

*Question 3.* What missions are forward deployed cutters authorized to undertake in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. The Coast Guard is authorized to execute all of the Service’s statutory missions in and around Guam, and other U.S. territories in the Indo-Pacific. Deployed cutters and the FRCs that are based out of Guam typically conduct law enforcement missions; search and rescue; ports, waterways and coastal security; defense readiness; and other law enforcement, which includes illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fisheries enforcement. These cutters are also authorized to provide humanitarian assistance to our regional partners, conduct limited international engagements on behalf of the U.S. in coordination with the U.S. Department of State, and assist the U.S. Department of Defense and other U.S. partner agencies as requested.

*Background:* Last year’s Coast Guard Reauthorization required the Coast Guard to commission and provide Congress a report regarding what, if any, changes are needed to Coast Guard authorities to ensure proper positioning to confront emerging challenges and threats. That report will be vitally important to the work of this committee, but it will be toothless without a Fleet Mix Analysis, which explicitly shows how the Coast Guard’s assets are positioned and where its priorities are for its cutter fleet.

*Question 4.* Have you taken the steps to commission that report, as required in Section 8249 of the FY21 NDAA?

Answer. Yes, the Coast Guard contracted the National Academy of Sciences to conduct the independent Authorities Study. The contract began in September 2021 and will last for 18 months.

*Question 5.* Do you personally believe that the Coast Guard possesses the necessary authorities to take up a more robust presence in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Yes, the Coast Guard possesses the necessary authorities to continue its robust presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

*Question 6.* Will you commit to ensuring that the required report to Congress on the cutter fleet under Section 8261 of last year's NDAA will be comprehensive and will form the basis for a from-scratch fleet mix analysis?

Answer. The Coast Guard is committed to providing a report on the combination of FRC's, Offshore Patrol Cutters, and National Security Cutters necessary to carry out Coast Guard missions, as required by Section 8261 of the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020.

*Question 7.* Regarding the future of Coast Guard aviation, you have previously stated that the Coast Guard is "tied into DoD in terms of Future Vertical Lift." What is the current state of collaboration between the Coast Guard and DOD Future Vertical Lift programs?

Answer. The Chief of the Office of Coast Guard Aviation Forces actively participates in the Pentagon's Future Vertical Lift (FVL) Joint Council of Colonels, which plans FVL asset development across all military services. Coast Guard aviation staff recently joined with Navy counterparts and RAND researchers to inform the Navy's Alternatives of Analysis for FVL asset development.

*Question 8.* Should the Coast Guard field future vertical lift systems with double the cruise speed and mission range of current recovery aircraft—such as the MH-60—how would this impact Coast Guard operational search and rescue capacity, particularly in the Arctic and Pacific regions?

Answer. FVL asset cruise speed and range capability are still undetermined; however, increased range, speed, and all-weather capability of the H-60, or an H-60-like FVL asset, could improve ability to reach rescue cases at extended distances and provide additional payload capacity for logistic support during Arctic and Polar operations. Ensuring shipboard operability with Coast Guard cutters will maximize the effectiveness of FVL assets in these remote regions.

*Question 9.* Is the Coast Guard considering the use of large vertical take-off UAVs as part of their future fleet structure?

Answer. The Coast Guard is considering multiple unmanned aerial vehicle variants to meet its future fleet requirements.

---

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. DAN SULLIVAN TO  
JASON M. VANDERHADEN

*Background:* Alaska relies heavily on Alternate Planning Criteria in lieu of the National Planning Criteria when determining appropriate vessel response plans. Many complaints revolve around the APC program, including many shortfalls that could spell disaster if a modern day Exxon Valdez were to occur. Through the 2018 Coast Guard bill, the GAO completed a report in September 2020 highlighting some of the issues. The Coast Guard responded by standing up the Maritime Oil-Spill Response Planning Advisory Group. They have since decided that the solution is to improve the internal paperwork process. After holding a two-day info-session in Alaska, it became apparent that the Coast Guard is not interested in outside opinions or support on this topic.

*Question 1.* Can you explain the Coast Guard's hesitancy to involve state and local agencies in the Vessel Response Plan (VRP) review and development process or to consult industry on ways to improve the Alternate Planning Criteria (APC) system?

Answer. The Coast Guard shares your concerns about oil-spill response resource capabilities and planning gaps in Alaska, and continually seeks way to improve our Vessel Response Plan (VRP) review processes and to clarify Alternate Planning Criteria guidelines. The members of the Maritime Oil-Spill Response Plan Advisory Group (MORPAG) actively engage with federal, state and local agencies in Alaska to address these complex issues through mechanisms like the Western Alaska Area Committee and the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force. Furthermore, the MORPAG solicited feedback from the various state, local, industry, and Federal stakeholders that attended its most recent meetings in Alaska, and will incorporate this feedback, as possible, to improve remote-area vessel response planning.

*Question 2.* This is an area I care very much about as the management of the oil spill response program is challenging and diverse in D17. I am disappointed in what I perceive as a lack of effort from the Coast Guard on this subject. What is

it going to take to see real progress regarding APCs in Alaska? What does congress need to do?

Answer. The Coast Guard also cares deeply about developing common sense vessel response planning policy to protect all of our Nation's coastlines from the threat of oil pollution. To improve remote area vessel response planning, the MORPAG established a deliberate and phased project management approach to develop sound policies, as recommended by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Per this phased approach, the Coast Guard, via the MORPAG, continues to address stakeholder equities and formulate well-informed solutions to improve the VRP program while facilitating alternatives and build-out of response infrastructure in remote areas. The Coast Guard expects to publish these solutions in 2022.

*Background:* The Coast Guard's Rescue 21 distress communication system only covers a fraction of Alaska's coastline while coastal states in the lower 48 have complete coverage of their shoreline. The Alaska system pales in comparison by not providing lines of bearing to distress calls, instead only providing large range rings that may cover thousands of square miles. This system in Alaska has not been meeting the Coast Guard's reliability standards with numerous radio towers routinely non-operational across the state. Meaning boaters cannot call out to the Coast Guard for help on VHF Channel 16 in large areas.

*Question 3.* I am very pleased to see the Coast Guard taking action to make substantial improvements to the equipment at many of the radio tower sites. In previous hearings, the Coast Guard has stated they would be working with DHS Science and Technology, as well as the Arctic Domain Awareness Center to study high latitude maritime connectivity mission needs, the use of satellites to conduct VHF communications, and the recapitalization of HF abilities in the Arctic. Can you provide an update on what these studies have produced and how Congress can aid in the implementation of these findings?

Answer. Both the Arctic Domain Awareness Center and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate studies are ongoing. The Coast Guard anticipates updates from both studies in the second quarter of FY 2022.

*Question 5.* Despite being a highly utilized waterway, a large portion of Cook Inlet near the Kenai River is in a massive VHF dead spot. Can you explain why the Coast Guard does not have VHF coverage in this area and what is needed to rectify this issue?

Answer. The acquisition methodology used to deploy the Rescue 21 (R21) capability to Alaska from FY 2005 to FY 2017 was "build to cost" since the acquisition cost for full coverage exceeded the resources available to the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard prioritized 68 sites in Alaska based on historical search and rescue case data to provide coverage until funds were exhausted. Funds were exhausted before the coverage could be provided to Cook Inlet and other areas.

The Coast Guard remains committed to modernizing the footprint of the R21 Alaska system to provide more reliable and resilient search and rescue services. The Coast Guard does not have immediate plans to expand coverage for R21 Alaska beyond the original acquisition footprint [expanding to ensure full coverage will be an important consideration for the next generation system] because any further development of the current R21 Alaska system would constitute a new acquisition program that must comply with the DHS Joint Requirements Integration Management System.

The Coast Guard has commenced preliminary steps to address this problem through a next generation system. The Coast Guard is documenting its requirements and assessing potential technology solutions that will inform in Rough Order of Magnitude estimates for a future acquisition. Additional funding will be required to expand the coverage area for R21 Alaska beyond the original footprint.