

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 23, 2016

Admiral John M. Richardson
Chief of Naval Operations
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-2000

Dear Admiral Richardson:

We write to urge you to include in Navy's (FY) 2017 Unfunded Priorities List (UPL) the balance of funding needed to complete construction of the third DDG-51 authorized in the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The FY 2016 NDAA authorized incremental funding for the procurement of this additional ship, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act included \$1 billion – roughly two-thirds of the total shipbuilding construction cost – for this ship which fulfills critical national security imperatives. We were disappointed, therefore, that the estimated \$480 million required to complete construction of this ship in FY 2016 was not included in the Navy's FY 2017 budget request.

We are concerned that failure to include the funding of this ship as a critical unmet requirement on the UPL could detrimentally affect the delivery of more DDG-51s to the fleet at a time of great geopolitical instability and increasing threats. Our destroyers are the workhorses of the Navy and are necessary to ensure that the Navy remains ready to immediately respond when called upon to do so. They deliver capability and presence that cannot be taken for granted, as has been demonstrated many times during the past year in waters including the South China Sea, the Black Sea, and the Strait of Hormuz.

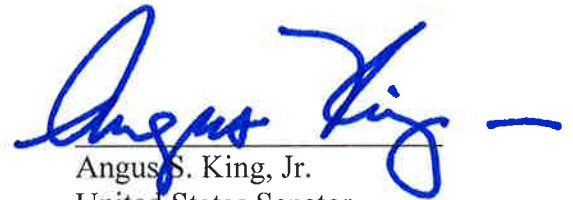
We simply need more ships to deter our enemies, reassure our allies, and be prepared to respond when called upon to do so. Investments in our destroyers and the shipbuilding industrial base will address these important national security imperatives.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator