



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000

7 April 2022

The Honorable Joe Courtney, Chairman
And The Honorable Robert Wittman, Ranking Member
Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, HASC
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Courtney and Ranking Member Wittman,

In response to inquiries from Members of Congress, and as part of our ongoing dialogue regarding the Navy's future fleet architecture with your Seapower Subcommittee, I want to articulate the Marine Corps' specific amphibious shipping requirements. Bottom line: To meet our statutory requirements, the Marine Corps needs no fewer than 31 traditional L-class amphibious ships (10 LHA/LHD, 21 LPDs) and, separately, 35 Light Amphibious Warships (LAWs).

For decades, the Navy and Marine Corps have demonstrated the power and versatility of Marine expeditionary forces embarked on amphibious ships. Operating as a combined arms team, Marines have come "from the sea" to support all manner of operations, to include: projecting combat power ashore; providing Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR); reinforcing U.S. embassies; training allies and partners; and executing Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). No naval platform in our inventory is capable of a more diverse set of missions across the range of military operations. Amphibious ships with embarked Marines remain in high demand by Combatant Commanders.

Since 2019, four Department of the Navy studies, including the ongoing Amphibious Force Requirement Study (AFRS) sponsored by the Secretary of the Navy, have examined amphibious ship force structure requirements. With slight variations, each found that an inventory of between 31 – 28 L-class ships and up to 35 LAW are necessary for naval forces to sustain consistent forward-deployed campaigning objectives and reliably react to unforeseen contingencies. However, combining these findings with readiness trends over the past 10 years and projected ship availability rates demonstrates the need for no less than 31 traditional L-class ships to ensure the warfighting readiness and responsiveness of amphibious naval forces.

At your convenience, I would like to discuss our ongoing analytic work to ensure you and your staff understand why an amphibious fleet of no fewer than 31 traditional L-class ships and 35 LAWs is necessary to meet our global requirements. As leaders guiding the future of American seapower, I value your perspectives on how we can build the most capable naval force possible to defend our Nation and her interests, today and into the future.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. H. Berger".

David H. Berger
General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps