

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building Washington,
DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear House and Senate Leaders:

On behalf of the hundreds of ocean science and technology companies, and thousands of individual industry professionals working in blue-technology sectors, we write to express our deep concern at the prospect of losing a critical national asset – **the Deep Ocean Test Facility (DOTF)** located in Annapolis Maryland.

The DOTF has been in operation since the 1960's and can simulate depths up to 27,000-feet in a number of environmental conditions. In 2012, the famous research submersible Alvin II, operated by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, was tested at this facility.

Originally a part of the David Taylor Research Center, the DOTF was transferred into private hands as a result of the 1995 Base Relocation and Closure Act. While it has remained open, the lack of maintenance and capital investment has now rendered the safe operation of the facility “unsustainable.”

The Penn State Applied Research Laboratory (ARL) currently operates the facility on lease from Annapolis Partners and is in the process of shutting down the facility.

Vice Admiral Paul Sullivan (ret.), Director of ARL, notified the Naval Sea Systems Command of the decision early in October of 2017. The Director provided four options to keep the DOTF's “one-of-a-kind” capability available for industry and government, but no substantive movement toward resolution has occurred.

Vice Admiral Sullivan suggested:

- Navy takeover (Un-BRAC) of the facility;
- Relocation of the test tank infrastructure to NSWC Indian Head
- Renegotiation of the AP lease with the Navy assuming O&M and CAPEX costs, and,
- Transfer of the deed to the ARL/PSU with Navy assuming O&M and CAPEX costs.



So why do we care? The area of ocean controlled by the United States is greater than the country's total land mass, and our "Blue Economy" contributes more economic output than the entire farm sector.

The 2017 NOAA Report on the Ocean and Great Lakes Economy found that the U.S. Blue Economy supports 149,000 business establishments who employ 3.1 million Americans, and contributes over \$350 billion to the gross domestic product annually.

The safe exploration and utilization of the ocean requires advanced technology. The DOTF is a critical asset used to test and qualify the operational capabilities of manned and unmanned vehicles as well as other important ocean technologies.

As a representative of the diverse ocean industry sectors that rely on testing facilities, such as DOTF, we thank you for your leadership and urge you to assist in reversing this outcome that will almost certainly have negative consequences for our Blue Economy and hinder the development of future ocean technologies.

Richard Lawson, CEO
IOSTIA

cc: Rep. Kay Granger, Chairwoman – House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
Rep. Peter Visclosky, Ranking Member – House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
Sen. Thad Cochran, Chairman – Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
Sen. Richard Durbin, Ranking Member – Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee