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CHELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1ST DISTRICT, MAINE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND
RELATED AGENCIES

INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND
RELATED AGENCIES

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS,
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HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

BIOTECHNOLOGY, HORTICULTURE, AND
RESEARCH

CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

January 7, 2019

Mr. Dirk Lesko
President
General Dynamics Bath Iron Works
700 Washington Street
Bath, ME 04530

Dear Mr. Lesko,

I am writing to address the ongoing subcontracting dispute between Bath Iron Works (BIW) and the Machinists Union Local Lodge S/6 (Local S/6).

With its superior force of shipbuilders constructing some of the Navy's most advanced surface warfare vessels, BIW makes integral contributions to our national security. Further, as one of Maine's largest employers, BIW plays a crucial role in our state's economy. Given the importance of your work, I appreciate you keeping my office informed of major developments at the yard, including ongoing efforts to maintain a skilled workforce.

I am aware that BIW is proposing to hire subcontracted workers to complete certain functions in response to perceived challenges in recruiting and retaining enough workers to meet the Navy's delivery schedule. Indeed, I recognize the need for BIW to meet Navy construction deadlines and the challenges inherent to Maine's current labor market.

However, Local S/6 has also reached out with significant reservations about the subcontracting proposal. A large share of BIW's most experienced shipbuilders will be retiring in coming years; hundreds of new workers will need robust training and support to offset these retirements and maintain standards of quality. I am concerned that this subcontracting proposal could undermine efforts to strengthen the permanent workforce and would urge you to first address issues with attracting and supporting new hires under existing systems. These issues include but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that BIW is making available and incentivizing overtime for current employees;
- Permitting flexibility in starting compensation for potential new hires with relevant existing skillsets; and
- Rehiring former employees who were dismissed by BIW absent serious consideration and discussion.

A productive next step would be to provide Local S/6 with more information on the following:

- The number of subcontractors BIW proposes to bring to the shipyard;
- The length of time BIW expects to utilize subcontracting, and;
- To what degree BIW will more fully consider Local S/6 proposals, such as increased overtime and making the shipyard more competitive for skilled machinists, to help alleviate the current construction backlog.

The importance of the long-term stability of BIW cannot be overstated – and it cannot be achieved without the trust and dedication of its shipbuilders. As such, I hope that you will continue to prioritize a reliable, proficient permanent workforce and a constructive partnership with Local S/6 in order to maximize the shipyard's competitiveness.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact my office if we can be of any assistance moving forward.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress