

USS WASHINGTON Commissioning Remarks
Jennifer Boykin
President, Newport News Shipbuilding
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Good morning. Distinguished platform guests, ladies and gentlemen, and most especially *Washington's* sponsor, Elisabeth Mabus. I am honored to be here representing the 20,000 women and men of Newport News Shipbuilding. Today's ceremony is a time to celebrate our nation's newest Virginia-class submarine. It's also a time to acknowledge the skill, commitment and dedicated service that led to this extraordinary achievement.

This submarine – like her sister ships of the class – represents the very best of American manufacturing, innovation, and pride. These traits apply to every aspect of the *Virginia* class shipbuilding program, including its acquisition process, which has enabled a steady drumbeat of production, a build rate of two ships per year, and the largest ever U.S. Navy shipbuilding contract to be awarded.

This construction pace creates stability and efficiency, allowing our shipbuilders and supplier businesses across the United States to invest in our businesses. It enables us to purchase larger quantities of material at lower prices, and as you know from shopping at places like Costco – a Washington State company – buying in bulk saves money. Very important to me, it also supports us in attracting, developing and retaining the brightest talent from across the nation. Everything I just described gets us one step closer to a 355-ship Navy.

Today at Newport News Shipbuilding, we have 13 submarines in various stages of construction. We, and our teaming partner at Electric Boat, have made substantial progress in lowering costs while maintaining the high quality standards synonymous with *Virginia*-class boats.

USS *Washington* is living proof of this. She was delivered in May as the highest quality, most complete and mission-ready *Virginia*-class submarine delivered to date. As USS *Washington* joins the fleet today, she will forever carry with her the pride and craftsmanship of her shipbuilders, the spirit of her sponsor, and the strength of her crew. But this submarine has a little something extra.

At the christening ceremony a year and a half ago, Elisabeth Mabus christened this boat with the traditional bottle of American sparkling wine. What was different – and a first for our *Virginia*-class submarines – is that the bottle was first dipped into water from Puget Sound. It was at this moment that the living connection between the USS *Washington* and Washington State began – a connection that will remain throughout this submarine's entire service life.

Commander Cavazos, congratulations to you and your fine crew. And to all the shipbuilders – thank you for another job well done!

Thank you.