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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

VICE CHAIR OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAIR OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

February 24, 2021

Honorable Thomas W. Harker
Acting Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Acting Secretary Harker:

It has come to my attention that the Department of the Navy (Navy) is implementing significant personnel reductions to the Naval Audit Service (NAS) without proper Congressional notification. In all, these reductions would cut the NAS workforce by 70% by FY23. While I fully appreciate the fiscal realities you face in meeting and executing your highest priority requirements, I am very concerned that these proposed reductions come at a critical time when the Navy must focus on being an efficient steward of taxpayer dollars.

The NAS Field Site in Norfolk, VA is located in my Congressional district, and my staff has received calls from employees expressing fear and anxiety that their positions will be eliminated as early as this fall. As the NAS is the Navy's internal audit agency and plays a significant role in identifying waste, fraud, and abuse, I am curious to know how these reductions will impact that critical and necessary oversight mission and how the Navy intends to mitigate those impacts moving forward. It will likely be more expensive for the Navy to contract with private, external, auditing firms to cover these auditing missions rather than utilize the experienced and dedicated civil service workforce already in place.

In the interest of Congressional oversight, I ask for your urgent attention in providing responses to the following:

(1) a summary outlining the proposed personnel reductions to, and future organizational structure of, the NAS and the rationale for this decision;
(2) previous and/or planned notifications to Congress regarding this decision; efforts to assist NAS employees who will be affected by these reductions;
(3) the Navy's plan to mitigate and execute its future audit and oversight mission in out years; and,
(4) if the plan is to contract the audit mission to private, external, auditing firms, a cost/benefit analysis of the NAS personnel reductions against the cost of those contracts.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress