Paul Solomon
3307 Meadow Oak Drive
Westlake Village, CA 91361
Paul.solomon@pb-ev.com

July 13, 2025

The Honorable Stephen A. Feinberg
Dep. Secretary of Defense
1010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1010

Subj: HASC NDAA for FY 2026 Markup on Digital Engineering

Dear Hon. Dep. Secretary of Defense Feinberg:

This is a follow-up to my letter, Subj: Big, Beautiful Bill Act and a Digital Engineering (DE) Capability, dated May 25. That letter included the following excerpts:

> To collect technical performance and schedule progress metrics, the capability requirements of the DE ecosystem should include the specifications of a common data file and format for transforming the schedule status of digital artifacts in the DE ecosystem to the contractor's Integrated Master Schedule (IMS). I recommend that the program manager be given authority to define, in the Systems Engineering Plan, the Work Breakdown Structure level, characteristics, criteria, and data elements of digital artifacts that will be in the digital thread. For artifacts that are on the critical path, the data elements should include planned and actual start and finish dates.

> Per DODI 5000.87, use automated tools to collect metrics to assess and manage the performance, progress, speed, cybersecurity, and quality of the software development, its development teams, and ability to meet users' needs.

I am pleased that my recommendations to Sen. Wicker and Rep. Norcross for legislation on DE were included in the HASC Markup of the NDAA for FY 2026. Section 213—Review and Alignment of Standards, Guidance, and Policies Relating to DE, would require each Secretary of a military department to complete a comprehensive review of the standards, guidance, and policies relating to DE within the covered Armed Forces under the jurisdiction of that Secretary. The review shall include the reference architectures, standards, and best practices for the use of DE tools (including digital twins and digital threads) at all stages of program design, development, and testing, development, and implementation of a standard reference architecture for each covered military service to guide the use of DE for program development, and recommendations for improvements to the use of DE tools in each such Armed Force, and the current standards guiding the use of such DE tools at all stages of program design, development, and testing.

Please refer to the following documents in preparing the reviews. They include best practices for the use of DE tools (including digital twins and digital threads).

Defense Acquisition Magazine articles:
- Better Program Management Through Digital Engineering, May/June 2022
- Better Program Management Through Digital Engineering Updated, July/August 2025

White Paper:

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Integrating the Embedded Software Path, Model-Based Systems Engineering, MOSA, and Digital Engineering with Program Management dated July 13, 2025

Yours truly,

Paul J. Solomon
CC:
John Wicker Chairman, SASC
Hon. Pete Hegseth, Sec. Def.
Hon. Glen Grothman, HOAC   Hon. Adam Smith, HASC
Hon. Mike Rogers, HASC   Hon. Tom Cole, HAC
Hon. Robert J. Wittman, HASC   Hon. Donald Norcross, HASC
Hon. Ro Khana, HASC   Hon. Jim Jordan, HCOA
Hon. Joni Ernst, SASC   Honorable Ken Calvert (HAC)
Hon. Elizabeth Warren, SASC   Hon. Pat Harrigan, HASC
Hon. John Phelan, Sec. of the Navy
Hon. Dan Driscoll, Sec. of the Army
DOGE   Hon. Emil Michael, USD(R&E)
Shelby Oakley, GAO   Mona Sehgal, GAO
Jon Sindreu, WSJ   Anthony Capaccio, Bloomberg News