

October 12, 2001

Mr. Ed Mattox  
Public Works Director  
Town of Sherman  
Sherman, Mississippi 38869

Dear Mr. Mattox, the Municipal Water and Pollution Control Operators Association, District 2, and all those in attendance at Big One in 2001—Annual Training Seminar:

We know the critical importance of safe drinking water for all people and clean water for the state's growth and development. Many factors threaten the safety of our water, which is why I established the Water and Sewer Task Force. The health of our children and families, and the protection of our natural resources are of great importance. The establishment of this task force will help ensure that our people have the use of clean and safe water.

This task force is charged with collecting data and evaluating Mississippi's water resources, specifically for economic development, emergency management and health. Under the leadership of Mr. Charles Chisolm and the more than 25 members of the task force, Mississippians will have a better understanding of where our water resources and needs are today and where we should go.

Approximately 87% Mississippians have access to a public water system. The security and quality of these water systems are essential to the health and development of our communities. Many of the systems are near or at design capacity, which limits future growth and economic development. According to figures from the Environmental Protection Agency's Needs Survey, it will take \$1.35 billion (\$475 per person) to satisfy Mississippi's drinking water needs.

Officials with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Mississippi Department of Health are working steadfastly to ensure the funding for water quantity and water quality for our communities. It is then incumbent on you, our control operators, to ensure the operations and maintenance of local water systems. I applaud you on our education and training efforts here today. If I can ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Very truly yours,

  
RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:mtb