

January 29, 2003

The Honorable Mike Easley
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Easley:

It is my pleasure to request your participation in *Leading South: The Southern Leadership Summit*, Southern Growth Policies Board's 31st annual conference to be held in Biloxi, Mississippi on June 1-3, 2003. As the name suggests, the three-day conference will focus on leadership initiatives in the South and policies for achieving higher levels of civic engagement to improve the quality of life in our communities and to strengthen the economic prosperity of the region. I have enclosed a current agenda for your review.

The conference will be the setting for unveiling the *2003 Report on the Future of the South*, an annual, high profile series that has been a catalyst for policy action in the region. The 2003 Report will reflect not only the latest research on leadership, but also the insights of state and community leaders who have participated in focus groups and interviews with Southern Growth staff.

I want to extend a special invitation to you to participate in the Town Meeting on June 3, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The Town Meeting is an opportunity for all Southern Governors to discuss, with audience participation, collaborative strategies for creating leaders with a regional perspective and an understanding of the shifting cultural and economic landscapes of the South. I will moderate the meeting and lead our discussion to include tactics for engaging diverse leadership from our communities, as well as, the corporate, government and academic sectors.

As Governor of Southern Growth Policies Board's home-state headquarters, I am sure you understand the significance of Southern Growth's meetings and conferences. I urge you to reserve the dates for this important meeting. It is critical that the current leadership in the South take part in these discussions to create credible and sustainable results.

Please feel free to call Jim Clinton, Southern Growth's executive director (919-941-5145), for further details on the conference. I hope that you will be able to participate.

Very truly yours,

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RM:klr
Enclosure