

*Remarks for the  
Advisory Commission on Remote Sensing Technologies  
June 20, 2002*

Thank you, Charles, for that introduction and for the tremendous work you do for this state. As executive director of the Department of Environmental Quality, you have helped strengthen the resources of our state and preserve them for generations to come.

I also want to thank you again for your good work in chairing the Water and Sewer Task Force, and for agreeing to serve as chair of this Advisory Commission on Remote Sensing Technologies.

Thanks, too, to David Litchliter for agreeing to serve as vice chair. David, I look forward to working with you again.

There's been a lot of talk recently about the expansion of Nissan and the special session scheduled for tomorrow. We've had some great successes in building Mississippi, especially in the area of expanding jobs through existing industries.

For these successes to continue, though, we must be constantly working on the strength of our economic development infrastructure – a foundation that relies heavily on the most accurate and up-to-date information about issues ranging from transportation to the physical features of our land.

That's where this Commission comes into play.

We've shown we can compete in the global marketplace. We've worked hard to reach this level, and we're going to have to work harder to stay at this level.

Our world is going digital. The economies we're dealing with are borderless and wireless. Information can become outdated in a matter of days, if not hours. By having the ability to provide the most up-to-date information possible for businesses and industries, we can remain competitive.

Most maps of the state produced by the U.S. Geological Survey are old and out-of-date. Their accuracy is low, data is inaccurate, and the issue of accessibility is a major hurdle.

Our task here is to go digital, leave the paper behind and do it in the most efficient manner possible.

That's my charge to you: to develop recommendations for the formation of a uniform clearinghouse of public remote sensing data, including a digital land base computer model of the state, and to make that clearinghouse easily accessible for people in Mississippi and around the world.

As you go about your work, I want to encourage each of you – as professionals and experts in your own rights – to attend these meetings regularly. It is important for the executive directors serving on this commission to attend and participate as much as possible.

The most critical need facing this commission comes in devising organizational changes and designation of roles to best coordinate the state agency efforts, and avoid duplication. This issue is so technical and so complex, we simply cannot afford to spend time doing the same thing twice.

There's a lot at stake in the work of this commission, and I have every confidence in the work you will do. I appreciate your willingness to serve and the ideas you will bring to the table over the next few weeks.