

*Remarks for the
CIAP Press Conference
August 31, 2001*

Good afternoon. I'm excited about what's happening today on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We are not just celebrating the signing of our draft plan for spending over \$24 million in federal money to benefit the ecological balance of the coast.

We are also celebrating the tremendous cooperation that made this day possible.

You've heard from the supervisors from three coast counties that are here with us today. I want to congratulate them on the great work they've done to reach this point.

The process that brought us to this day included three formal, public meetings, plus countless other meetings between representatives of the Department of Environmental Quality, the supervisors, higher education and private industry.

Through their cooperative efforts, the Mississippi Gulf Coast is going to see some important changes in its habitat protection, water quality, infrastructure, and fisheries.

The projects in this plan will mean a great deal to those who live and work in this area. They will benefit the fishermen who depend on a healthy Gulf of Mexico to make their living. They will preserve an important part of the culture of the coast.

I want to take a moment to thank all those who gave so much of their time and energy to make this day happen.

Charles Chisholm and Jayne Buttross of the Department of Environmental Quality took this project on and truly made it successful.

The Boards of Supervisors represented here today – thank you for the courage you showed to work together on a common goal. Your work and cooperation is proof of what can happen when we focus on a shared result with shared responsibility.

Thanks, too, to the other state agencies that shared their expertise and advice – the Departments of Health; Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks; and Agriculture.

I appreciate the work done by the Secretary of State, the Mississippi Emergency Management Association, the Department of Marine Resources, and the Forestry Commission.

There's an old Native American proverb that says "we don't inherit the earth from our ancestors, but borrow it from our children."

Because of what we are doing today, we will return to our children a Mississippi Gulf Coast in better shape than when we first borrowed it.

So much work to produce so many results. It's a great thing for the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Thank you, and now it's my extreme pleasure to sign our plan for the Coastal Impact Assistance Program.