

*Remarks for the
OCEANS 2002 Conference
October 29, 2002*

(recognize Admiral Donaldson, other dignitaries)

I want to take a moment to welcome the exhibitors and conference attendees who are here tonight, especially those who are here from out of state. I know you will enjoy your time here on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and I believe you will be impressed with the work being done here.

The range of our work is broad, but our commitment is focused. From education, where we are going to be the first state to put an Internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom; to economic development, where we're attracting companies like Nissan and being recognized as one of the top ten states in the nation for small business; Mississippi's moving like never before.

That's something I'm proud of, and I know you'll find some more folks here who will share that pride with you.

Talking about the work of this conference for a moment, the great American conservationist John Muir once wrote, “when one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

Such is the nature of the work we have to do when maintaining the balance between economic development and conservation.

We need to find the delicate balance between progress and conservation, and I know we can do it.

Mississippi is blessed with tremendous natural resources, resources we must conserve as our gift to future generations.

We're working hard to do just that. Through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, coastal counties are joining forces and cooperating with a common spirit toward the conservation of the Coast.

And, with Bill Walker in place as the new executive director of the Department of Marine Resources, we are strengthening our focus on the management of the state's broad range of resources. I want to thank Bill for the good work he's doing and the work yet to come.

Mississippi has precious natural assets, and we must protect them. In 1855, Chief Seattle said, “humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.”

We recognize that all things connect in Mississippi. Together, we’re keeping the connection strong and healthy – and it will benefit our people, our economy, and our land.

That will be our gift to future generations.

Thank you, and enjoy your time in Mississippi!