

*Remarks for the
DEQ "Year of Clean Water" Press Conference
May 28, 2002*

Good morning. In March of last year, I established the Governor's Water and Sewer Task Force and charged them with the job of outlining the water infrastructure needs of the state and recommendations for improving the system.

Last November, their recommendations were presented in a report that clearly presented what needed to be done to ensure safe, abundant drinking water and proper wastewater treatment for the people of our state.

During the 2002 legislative session, we worked to implement those recommendations – and we were successful. Five bills were passed by the Legislature, and the resulting improvements will benefit our people and our economy.

The bills addressed economic viability, chronic wastewater or water supply system problems, funding for clean water programs and loan subsidies, and fire protection. Each one of these new laws will have a positive effect on our communities and strengthen the quality of life for our people.

I want to thank Charles Chisholm, Executive Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, for his service as chair of the Water and Sewer Task Force, and the members of the Water and Sewer Task Force for their great work, both during the meeting process last year and in the legislative session. Their expertise and commitment has paid off.

Today, I also have the great pleasure issuing a proclamation declaring 2002 as “The Year of Clean Water” in Mississippi, and October 2002 as “Clean Water Month” in the state.

(read proclamation)

Finally, I want to take a moment to recognize five of Mississippi's best students. These five young people from Amory High School – Matthew Herndon, David Wathen, Daniel Philley, Anyslee Moon, and Kayla Horne – participated in the Mississippi Envirothon Competition.

Because of their accomplishments and the leadership offered by their sponsor, Kim Parker, they have been selected to represent the state at the National Youth Watershed Summit in Maryland in October.

I'm proud of these students, the work they have done, and the way they represent Mississippi.

Let's thank them... (lead applause)

Now, I'd like to ask Charles Chisholm to make some remarks, and then we'll be glad to take any questions. Charles?