

*Remarks for the
Department of Marine Resources Press Conference
July 8, 2002*

Good afternoon. Eight years ago, the Department of Marine Resources was created to protect and conserve the marine interests of Mississippi. The scope of the agency's work is broad, balancing public wetlands, fishing seasons, licensing and monitoring with the recreational and educational uses of our resources.

With such broad responsibilities, the department requires experienced leadership to fulfill its mission.

Today I'm proud to announce a new leader for the Department of Marine Resources – one who possesses the experience, the knowledge and the vision to fulfill this department's mission for the 21st century.

Bill Walker comes to us from his position as Chief of the Ecological Diagnostics Branch of the Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf Ecology Division in Florida, and we are proud to have him back in Mississippi.

He received both his master's and doctorate at Mississippi State University, and most of his professional career has taken place in the state. As a respected teacher, researcher and published author, he has built a strong reputation around the country as one of the best in his field.

Bill Walker is the ideal candidate for this position. I am confident in his knowledge of marine science and his capability to serve as the Executive Director for Marine Resources. I look forward to his return to Mississippi and his service to our state in this position.

There's an old Indian proverb that says "we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children." Under Bill Walker's leadership, the valuable marine resources of our state will be passed on to our children in pristine condition.

His understanding and appreciation of our fragile environment will benefit Mississippi and generations of our people. I'm pleased he has chosen to return to Mississippi, I'm proud he will be leading this department for our state, and I'm thankful for the experience and vision he brings to this position.

I'd like to ask Bill to make a few remarks, then we'll be glad to take any questions.