September 19, 2005

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The events of the past year have again highlighted the need for improved information about our ever-changing planet. The recent devastation across the Gulf states caused by Hurricane Katrina combined with the Asian tsunami disaster, which took the lives of more than 200,000 people last December, clearly illustrate the need to better understand how the Earth system works and how we might begin to better anticipate and respond to natural disasters. This information—obtained from satellites, buoys, aircraft, and other instruments—also greatly impacts our energy, transportation, construction, health, and tourism sectors, among others, and helps to significantly reduce loss of life and property.

As representatives of scientific organizations, businesses, and user groups from both the private and public sectors interested in maintaining U.S. leadership in Earth observations as well as a healthy and vibrant economy, we write to you to express strong support for the Administration's prioritization of global Earth observations. We believe that global Earth observations are critical to our social and economic growth, and urge you to request funding to establish the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System (IEOS) within the international Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).

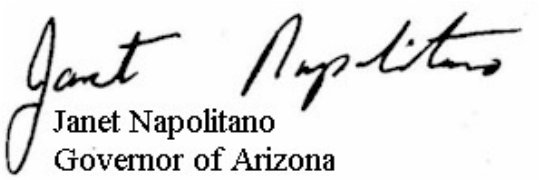
The development of a comprehensive and sustained Earth observation system, composed of new and existing technologies, will provide unprecedented access to critical—likely life-saving—data and information about our planet. IEOS and GEOSS will serve both this country and our allies around the world. Whether aiding hurricane forecasters, scientists studying ocean currents, airline analysts rerouting flights, traders exchanging energy futures, families contemplating evacuation from their homes, or emergency managers planning response scenarios, these systems promise to respond to the needs of the nation—saving lives and property, protecting and growing the economy, enhancing the security of our population, better utilizing existing technologies, and serving as a catalyst to drive new observation and information technology capabilities.

The IEOS and GEOSS will balance science and technology innovation with societal and economic needs, both nationally and globally. Therefore, we applaud the work of this

Administration in initiating this unprecedented U.S. and international effort to establish the Global Earth Observation System of Systems and urge you to begin funding development of this program.

Thank you for your leadership in this area.

Sincerely,



Janet Napolitano
Governor of Arizona
Chair, Western Governors' Association



M. Michael Rounds
Governor of South Dakota
Vice Chair, Western Governors' Association



John W. Douglass
President & CEO
Aerospace Industries Association (AIA)



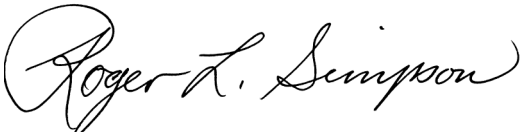
Nancy Colleton
Executive Director
Alliance for Earth Observations (AEO)



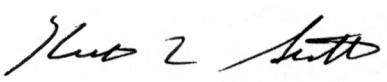
James R. Kirkpatrick
Executive Director
American Astronautical Society (AAS)



Stephen M. Testa
President
American Geological Institute (AGI)



Roger L. Simpson
President
American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics



Keith L. Seitter
Executive Director
American Meteorological Society (AMS)



Karen L. Schuckman
President
American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS)



Katherine S. McCarter
Executive Director
Ecological Society of America (ESA)



Richard C. Wertz
Executive Director
Foundation for Earth Science



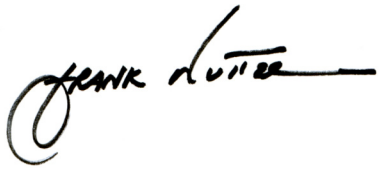
W. Cleon Anderson
President and CEO
The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. (IEEE)



Albin J. Gasiewski
President
IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (GARSS)



Peter Saundry, Ph.D.
Executive Director
National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE)



Frank Nutter
President
Reinsurance Association of America



David Logsdon
Executive Director
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Space Enterprise Council (SEC)