

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).

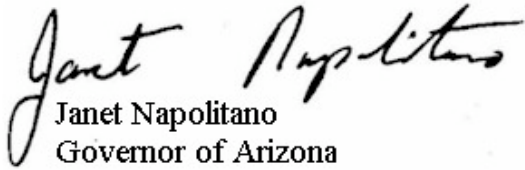
The development of a comprehensive and sustained Earth observation system, composed of new and existing technologies, will provide unprecedented access to critical—likely life-saving—data and information about our planet. IEOS and GEOSS will serve both this country and our allies around the world. Whether 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



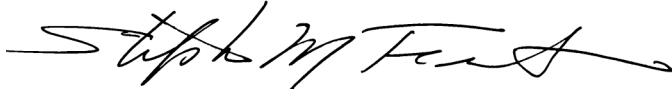
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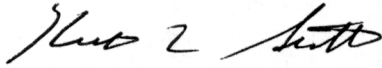
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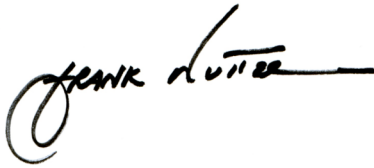
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