

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 27, 1999

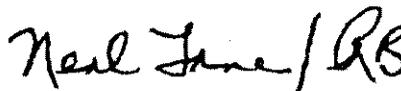
Mr. John R. Copple
Chief Executive Officer
Space Imaging, Inc.
12076 Grant Street
Thornton, CO 80241

Dear Mr. Copple:

Thank you for your letter of June 24, 1999 regarding public and private Earth remote sensing activities and government plans for the dissemination of data from the Landsat 7 system. You recommend that U.S. policy for access to data from Landsat 7 distinguish between researchers and other users when establishing costs. We do not believe this practice would serve the best interest of the research or commercial sectors and do not plan to pursue such a policy change at this time.

The Administration has been a strong and consistent supporter of the Earth remote sensing programs that are an essential component of the global change research efforts of the U.S. and other countries. Landsat makes a unique contribution to the study of the global environment; no other system provides the same combination of high-quality, synoptic, moderate resolution, repetitive coverage of the land surface of the Earth. Obtaining the widest possible dissemination of Landsat data and the greatest possible participation from foreign ground stations will increase the scientific return on the U.S. taxpayer investment in Landsat. We have also been strong supporters of the commercial space activities that promise considerable economic benefits for our nation, including private sector remote sensing and the commercial "value-added industry" that uses satellite data to create tailored products for customers. We believe that providing unenhanced data from Landsat to all users on the same low-cost terms is the best way to support our research and commercial objectives.

Sincerely,



Neal Lane
Assistant to the President
for Science and Technology

cc: Mr. Herbert Satterlee, III
Mr. Gilbert D. Rye

June 24, 1999

Dr. Neal Lane
Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Old Executive Office Building
17th St and Penn Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20502

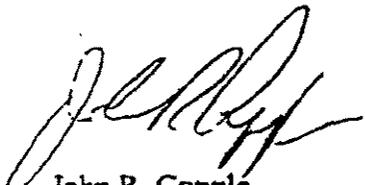
Dear Dr. Lane:

On behalf of the Satellite Remote Sensing industry we are writing you to express our concerns about recent developments affecting our industry. Collectively we represent in excess of 75% of the private investments in commercial remote sensing systems. These investments have been made to create a commercial marketplace for remote sensing data and information and restore the leadership of the United States in remote sensing. The recognition that the US had fallen behind and the desire to bring the US back to the forefront of remote sensing leadership was a primary goal of the *Land Remote Sensing Policy Act* (P.L. 102-555) signed into law by President Clinton on October 28, 1992. Subsequent to passage of the act the first commercial privately funded high resolution remote sensing system license was granted to WorldView, which later became Earth Watch. Since then 11 additional licenses have been issued. Subsequent to passage of the *Land Remote Sensing Policy Act* President Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 23 on March 10, 1994. The PDD, among other things, loosened restrictions on the sale of high resolution satellite imagery to foreign entities. It demonstrated a clear desire by the US government to maintain a strong presence in the international remote sensing market.

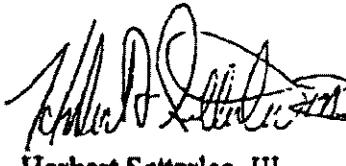
Although the *Land Remote Sensing Policy Act* paved the way for a commercial industry it also returned operation of Landsat 7 back to the government due to the concerns over the commercial pricing of the data to the government and science users the system was built to support. Unfortunately, the *Land Remote Sensing Policy Act* did not restrict the uses of the system to these users and paved the way for the US government to compete with the private remote sensing firms the government had sought to encourage. As an example the US government is negotiating "access fees" with foreign users for Landsat 7 at \$250,000. The previous commercial price for access to Landsat 5 was \$600,000 and the rate for our high resolution systems must be much more to recover our investments. The Landsat 7 pricing is creating unrealistic expectations in the international marketplace. In addition, Landsat 7 data prices per scene have been set at \$475 for minimally processed data and \$600 data for more complex processed data. These prices are over fifty percent cheaper than any other comparable commercially available civilian or private satellite imagery.

We fully support the use of the Landsat 7 system to provide data to government and science users for the purposes of furthering earth science, however we ask that the sale of data and international access agreements be established at "commercial rates" and/or turned over to the private sector. We understand that there is a PDD drafted and in review in your office to transfer operational responsibility of the Landsat 7 program from NOAA to the Department of Interior's US Geological Survey (USGS). We ask that you include language in the PDD along the lines we have proposed to preclude the competition of the US government with private firms in remote sensing.

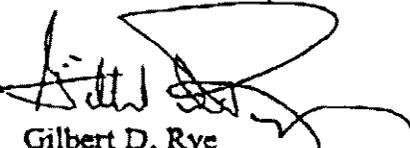
Sincerely,



John R. Copple
 Chief Executive Officer
 Space Imaging, Inc.



Herbert Satterlee, III
 Chief Executive Officer
 Earthwatch, Inc.



Gilbert D. Rye
 President
 Orbital Image, Inc.

cc: Jeff Hofgard, Assistant Director for Space and Aeronautics
 Duncan T. Moore, Associate Director for Technology