

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Support Landsat A Critical Tool for Water Resource Managers

May 23, 2007

Dear Colleague:

We write to request your support for continued funding of thermal infrared (TIR) capabilities in the NASA and U.S. Geological Survey Landsat Program. Since 1972, the TIR capabilities of the existing Landsat satellites have provided critical information for federal and state agencies, scientists, and water resource managers who deal with water-related issues. It is increasingly critical that we provide the resources necessary to gather the data required to make sound decisions related to our present and future water use.

The TIR data provided by Landsat 5 and Landsat 7 is critical to informing the decisions made by water resource managers. The data is used to evaluate seasonal surface and ground water use, plan water budgets, manage irrigation practices, administer water rights, oversee compliance with USDA conservation-related contracts, study impacts related to converting agricultural lands to urban uses, evaluate water needs of fish and wildlife including endangered species, and ensure water is used in compliance with state and federal law, interstate compacts, and international treaties.

Having served well beyond their designed useful life, the existing Landsat satellites are failing. While NASA is scheduled to deploy Landsat 8 in 2011, unfortunately, the President's FY 2008 request for funding for NASA's Earth Systematic Missions Program-Landsat Data Continuity Mission (LDCM) does not include funding for a thermal infrared sensor on Landsat 8. The total additional cost for such a sensor, with capabilities similar to Landsat 5 and Landsat 7, is estimated to be approximately \$90 million dollars.

We urge you to join us in requesting that \$35 million be added to the President's FY2008 LDCM request. This funding will allow NASA to immediately take the necessary steps to ensure a thermal sensor is included on Landsat 8. If we fail to act now, we will risk losing this important tool for the long-term future.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator