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April 29, 2005

Honorable Gayle Norton
Secretary, Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW, MS 7229-MIB
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Recommendation from the Advisory Committee for the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive (NSLRSDA); FACA Committee File No. 216019

Dear Secretary Norton:

On April 14, 2005, the National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive Advisory Committee (Committee) convened it second meeting under a two-year Charter. The Committee was established, consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and other applicable laws, to assist the Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior, in coordination with the USGS National Center for Earth Resources Observation and Science, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in carrying out responsibilities under the Land Remote Sensing Policy Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-555). This Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to consult with and seek advice from users and producers of remote sensing data and data products in determining the initial content of, or in upgrading, NSLRSDA's basic data set.

The Committee submits, herein, its recommendations from that meeting.

Prof. Joanne Gabrynowicz, Co-Chair
Director, National Remote Sensing and Space Law Center
University of Mississippi School of Law

Dr. Samuel Goward, Co-Chair
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Noting that the Secretary of the Interior is to "assure preservation of the basic data set" in the National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive (NSLRSDA).[1]

Recognizing the Department's efforts to extend the life of *Landsats 5* and *7*, important national assets, the Committee applauds the Department's efforts in this regard.

Observing the current disrupted coverage in global *Landsat* data experienced by significant U.S. users and policy makers, the Committee *notes* the adverse impacts on global food security analysis and disaster management, among many.

Noting the high probability of the imminent interruption in *Landsat* mission continuity, the Committee is deeply concerned about the impact of the projected three or more year gap in *Landsat* data in the National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive.

Noting that the current gap can only get worse.

Therefore, to provide *Landsat* data continuity in NSLRSDA, the Committee **strongly recommends** that the Secretary,

1. **Sustain** support for *Landsats 5* and *7*.

2. **Protect** the Operational Land Imager (OLI) on the NPOESS baseline from schedule slips by actively participating in the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS) Executive Committee in order to ensure *Landsat* data continuity.

3. **Minimize** the duration of the data gap by exercising mission responsibility as a member of the NPOESS Integrated Program Office (IPO) in order to support the OLI launch occurring no later than 2010 by ensuring the pre-launch program design, launch plan and on-orbit concept of operation that supports a minimal data gap duration.

4. **Fund** fully the development, implementation and operation of associated *Landsat* ground infrastructure to include acquiring, archiving, processing, and distributing data.

5. **Support** development of new systems, based on innovative "cost effective"[2] technologies, for Earth observations that would complement NPOESS *Landsat*.

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[1] P.L. 102-555; 15 USC 5652 (b).

[2] Letter to Dr. John H. Marburger, III, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy from Ken Fleming, President Management Association for Private Photogrammetric Surveyors and Karen L. Schuckman, President, American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, April 6, 2005.

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