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November 18, 2005

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

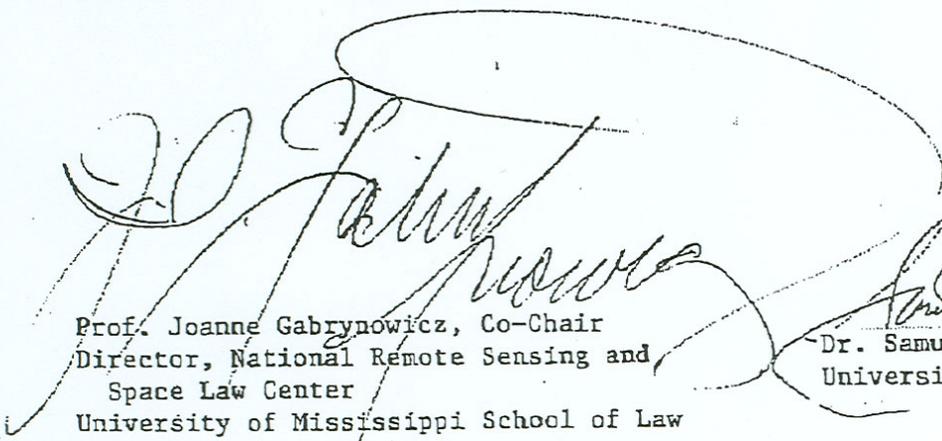
Re: Recommendation from the Advisory Committee for the U.S. Department of Interior,
National Satellite Lands Remote Sensing Data Archive (NSLRSDA)

Dear Secretary Norton:

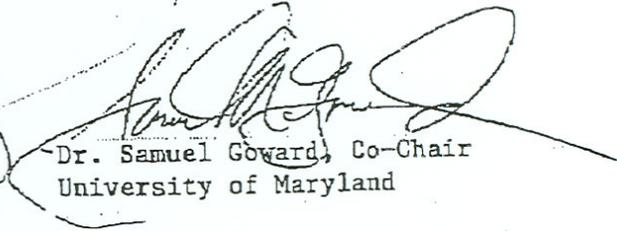
On October 18-20, 2005, the National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive Advisory (NSLRSDA) Committee convened its third meeting under its two year charter. The Committee was established consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and other applicable laws, to assist the Office of the Secretary, 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 the October meeting.

Sincerely,



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



Dr. Samuel Goward, Co-Chair
University of Maryland

Recommendation

The National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive Advisory Committee (AAC) has twice previously expressed its concern about the serious consequences of a gap in the Landsat data record. Both responses to that concern were that the Administration had addressed the data gap with the decision to place the Operational Land Imager (OLI) on NPOESS. Since then, two new facts have occurred that have exacerbated the seriousness of the gap:

1. NPOESS will not accommodate the OLI sensor¹.
2. Unless an alternative decision is made, the data gap will be longer and more severe than previously anticipated.

Noting that the Secretary of Interior is to “assure the preservation of the basic data set” in the National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive²

Noting that the Administration has endorsed an operational Landsat³

Noting that an adequate capability equivalent to Landsat for seasonal global coverage exists nowhere else in the world

Noting that the U.S. requires a reliable, independent primary source of global land earth observation to support the US economic, national security, environmental, and disaster response interests

The AAC *recommends*, with even greater urgency than before, that the Secretary:

- **actively seek** the authority, responsibility and funding for the Department of Interior to manage the operational Landsat Program now and in the future,
- work with NASA to **immediately pursue** the reprogramming of funds that were allocated to the NPOESS/OLI initiative to initiate an Other Transaction Agreement (OTA)-type procurement for a new system jointly designed by NASA and DOI, built by NASA, and managed by DOI,
- **support** the accelerated procurement and deployment of a new system(s), based on rapid procurement methodologies and innovative “cost effective” technologies for Earth observations.

¹ *Making Appropriations For Science, The Departments Of State, Justice, And Commerce, And Related Agencies For The Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2006, And For Other Purposes*, H.R. Report 109-272, 1st, sess., Nov. 7, 2005, pg. 173.

² P.L. 102-555; 15 USC 5652 (b).

³ Memorandum for the Secretaries of State, Defense, the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce Health and Human Services, Transportation, Homeland Security; Administrators of EPA, NASA; Directors of OMB, Central Intelligence, National Science Foundation; and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Washington, D.C., August 13, 2004.