



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUN 19 1980

OFFICE OF  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr. George S. Benton  
Chairman, Interim Policy Group  
on Land Remote Sensing  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration  
~~U. S. Department of Commerce~~  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Benton:

The Transition Plan for Civil Operational Land Remote Sensing has been reviewed as requested in your letter of May 16, 1980. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has no objection to the recommendations as proposed in Review Copy (No. 3) dated May 30, 1980 with revisions dated through June 6, 1980.

There are however, several facets of the plan which we believe merit further consideration.

1. We are concerned about the institutional framework and effectiveness of the Program Board. Although it is proposed as the forum representing the Federal agencies using Landsat data, it appears to have only an advisory capacity since NOAA retains veto rights on the Board's recommendations.
2. The theme of increasing revenues from Landsat products by imposing copyright privileges on the Federal agencies is viewed as a cumbersome fiscal exercise that has little opportunity of success in practical application.
3. The present plan wherein NOAA "budgets for the core system" appears to be most viable option for funding the program for the foreseeable future. The alternative of "cost sharing" would place an unbearable burden on agencies like EPA which are endeavoring to identify and promote practical uses of Landsat technology.
4. It is the position of this Agency that we will be willing to pay reasonable prices for the Landsat data that will meet our requirements. We will also commit additional resources to encourage the transfer of Landsat technology to those activities working toward the improvement of the quality of our environment. On the other hand, if prices of Landsat data are inflated to the point where

aircraft acquired data becomes more cost effective then EPA Regions, States and local agencies will cease to use Landsat data. This we believe will be counter productive to the nation's long range objectives in space technology.

Sincerely yours,



Stephen J. Gage  
Assistant Administrator  
for Research and Development