

May 2006 Public Comment: Thomas Goreau

GLOBAL CORAL REEF ALLIANCE

A non-profit organization for protection and sustainable management of coral reefs

Global Coral Reef Alliance,

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Public Comment Opportunity

US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting

To all genuinely concerned about saving Southeast Florida's last coral reefs:

Southeast Florida reefs are dying, but every time the facts are presented from the people who are actually in the water looking at the corals, there is some excuse concocted why they aren't allowed to speak at public meetings or present their findings, or some manipulation of due process to ignore or effectively make meaningless the public access and public response procedures the Task Force is legally required to follow.

Cry of the Water and the Global Coral Reef Alliance presented formal grievances to the Coral Reef Task Force requesting 9 specific actions to save Broward's best coral from being killed by dredging, backed by massive public petitions. Not only did the Task Force refuse to act, they wouldn't even respond to the petition at all as they are mandated to do. Nor were they even willing to state that federal and state agencies belonging to the Task Force must obey the law to halt actions that damage corals, the very law under which the Task Force was established!

What we are hearing from the Task Force is basically a public relations propaganda exercise to pretend that those in charge are acting to protect corals and restore damaged reefs when in fact their actions have the opposite result. This amounts to a cover-up of their refusal to live up to their mandate to protect coral.

Instead of open access, honest responses to public concerns, and transparent respect for the law, we have a fraudulent charade in which the Task Force refuses to ask its own members to live up to the very law under which the Task Force was founded, and in which public comments like this one are simply ignored.

All we are asking is that they have the honesty to live up to their mandate to protect living corals, instead of protecting the dead rocks and concrete dumped as "mitigation" for the corals killed by actions that are permitted by federal, state, and county agencies in violation of the Coral Reef Protection Executive Order.

Why won't the Task Force admit that the reefs are being killed by dredging, inadequately-treated sewage, new diseases, and global warming? When will they stop

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peddling the cynical and fraudulent claim that reefs are “resilient” when in fact they are fragile and vulnerable? When will they start supporting efforts to protect corals, stop authorizing projects that kill them, and stop blocking meaningful public participation?

Massive irresponsibility of the US Coral Reef Task Force in refusing to require that the law be followed by Task Force members is now a major contribution to killing US coral reefs.

Sincerely yours,

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