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Received via e-mail: March 28, 2012

From: NRDC [<mailto:nrdcinfo@nrdconline.org>] On Behalf Of David Wachsman
Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 12:27 AM
To: Paul Howard
Subject: Develop strong protections for our Atlantic Coast canyons and seamounts and their deep sea corals

Mar 27, 2012

Paul Howard, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council 50 Water Street, Mill 2 Newburyport, MA 1950

Dear Howard, Executive Director,

I strongly support the New England Fishery Management Council's proposals to protect deep sea coral areas in the region, including in the submarine canyons and seamounts. As you know, while the deep sea coral habitats are relatively unscathed today, one pass of bottom trawl gear could wipe out rare coral communities that have been growing for hundreds of years.

I am concerned that development of the deep sea coral protection initiative, as well as the overall habitat protection plan, has stalled. I encourage you and the rest of the council to get the process back on track and specifically for the council's Habitat Committee and the full council to redouble efforts to complete the proposals for protection of deep sea coral areas so that they are ready for public review.

This is the perfect opportunity to enact protections, before irreversible ecological harm occurs. Designating deep sea coral protection zones would also send a powerful signal to the oil and gas industry, which is poised to exploit these areas.

I am counting on the council to ensure a healthy future for our region's ocean resources and millions of people who depend on them.

Sincerely,

Mr. David Wachsman
2819 Unity Tree Dr
Edgewater, FL 32141-5509