

Statement of the Coral Reef Crisis Working Group Meeting, The Royal Society 6 July 2009

Coral reefs are the most biologically diverse habitats of the oceans and provide essential ecosystem goods and services to hundreds of millions of people.

Temperature-induced mass coral bleaching causing widespread mortality on the Great Barrier Reef and many other reefs of the world started when atmospheric CO₂ exceeded 320ppm.

At today's level of ~ 387ppm CO₂, reefs are seriously declining and time-lagged effects will result in their continued demise with parallel impacts on other marine and coastal ecosystems.

Proposals to limit CO₂ levels to 450ppm will not prevent the catastrophic loss of coral reefs from the combined effects of global warming and ocean acidification.

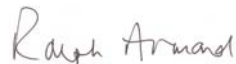
To ensure the long-term viability of coral reefs the atmospheric CO₂ level must be reduced significantly below 350ppm.

In addition to major reductions in CO₂ emissions, achieving this safe level will require the active removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

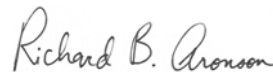
Given the above, ecosystem-based management of other direct human induced stresses on coral reefs, such as over-fishing, destructive fishing, coastal pollution and sedimentation, will be essential for the survival of coral reefs on which so many people depend.



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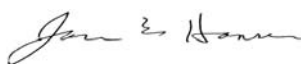
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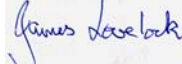
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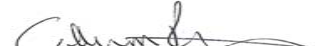
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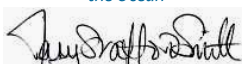
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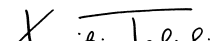
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