



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

Post Office Box 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

May 21, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Southwest
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to encourage you to protect the coral reefs off the southeastern coast of the United States. We understand that there may be an option to use the Antiquities Act to preserve some of our underwater resources. A good choice, we believe, would be the area known as the "Charleston Bump" to be designated a Marine National Monument.

These largely unexplored reefs, stretching from North Carolina to Florida, cover an area nearly the size of South Carolina. Many of them lie 1,000 feet or more below the ocean's surface. This deepwater coral ecosystem constitutes a national treasure on par with Yosemite Valley and the Northwest Hawaiian Islands in its beauty and deserves protection.

The fragile nature of these slow-growing and long-lived corals makes them highly vulnerable to disturbance. While the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources is working with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to provide partial protection for this coral ecosystem using existing authority, and we have received citizen support for protection of the reefs, your further action would allow us to better preserve this important resource. The deepwater coral ecosystem offshore from South Carolina, along with the coral ecosystems adjacent to the other southeast states, are in need of your attention and leadership.

I look forward to working with you on this and other projects. Take care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Sanford".

Mark Sanford

MS/je.11