



STATEMENT FROM SEAWEB'S TOO PRECIOUS TO WEAR CAMPAIGN:
Earth Day is a good day for coral conservation as legislation passes key milestone

(Washington, D.C. - April 22, 2009) Members of the *Too Precious To Wear* coral conservation campaign, including SeaWeb, Tiffany & Co. and Leber Jeweler Inc., commend the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Natural Resources for passing the Coral Reef Conservation Act (H.R. 860) out of committee today. The vote, coinciding with Earth Day, signifies a renewed sense of urgency and a realization among our elected officials of the importance of corals and coral reefs.

The legislation, introduced by Representative Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU), would strengthen the 2000 Coral Reef Conservation Act by calling for an expansion of the U.S. Coral Reef Conservation Program; granting greater authority for emergency action in response to damage to coral from vessel impacts, derelict fishing gear, anchors, and disaster-related circumstances resulting from human activities. It also includes measures to assess the trade of both living and dead corals in the context of coral survival, laying the groundwork for future efforts to enhance coral protection. This important addition to the 2000 Act will pave the way for increased oversight and understanding of the often-unregulated international trade in corals and reef species.

We applaud the members of the House Natural Resources Committee for swiftly acting on this critical piece of legislation. Corals in the United States and around the world are threatened by global climate change, pollution, overfishing and consumer demand due to their use in jewelry and decorative items. The provisions in the Act are desperately needed to stem corals' decline. We urge the U.S. House of Representatives to bring the matter to the floor for a vote and ask the U.S. Senate to move quickly in order to implement the Act as soon as possible. With these protections in place, our corals will have a much better chance at survival. Without them, coral reef health will inevitably continue to decline.

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For interviews with spokespeople, high-resolution coral photos and b-roll, please contact Corinne Knutson (+1.808.497.3360 or cknutson@seaweb.org).

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Too Precious to Wear is a SeaWeb campaign to create a demand for coral conservation. *Too Precious to Wear* is made possible with support from The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, Kingfisher Foundation, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and The Ocean Foundation. www.tooprecioustowear.org.

SeaWeb, founded in 1996 to raise awareness of the growing threats to the ocean and its living resources, is a communications-based nonprofit organization that utilizes social marketing techniques to advance ocean conservation. By increasing public awareness, advancing science-based solutions and mobilizing decision-makers around ocean conservation, SeaWeb has brought together multiple, diverse and powerful voices for a healthy ocean. www.seaweb.org

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