

May 2006 Public Comment: David Ballentine

After listening to presentations and discussions, I feel compelled to add to the comment provided by Judy Lang. During the Task Force meeting, there was an excellent presentation on the extent of the 2005 coral bleaching event that resulted in a product: tools for reef managers to deal with bleaching events. I would argue that once a bleaching event has occurred, it is too late for managers to do very much constructive. Providing managers with such tools in my mind is paramount to avoiding a confrontation with the true root cause. Bleaching events are occurring at an increasing rate and are increasing in their severity. It has been firmly established that bleaching is related to elevated water temperatures. It has also been established that global warming is contributing to increased seawater temperatures. I believe that the Coral Reef Task Force should be adamant in recommending that the United States government come into agreement with the Kyoto Accord and take appropriate measures to push for a decrease in burning of fossil fuels. While local action strategies are well intended, the ultimate future of coral reefs lies well above the purview of local activities. In this respect I believe that NOAA should be applying its weight towards influencing necessary steps to mitigate sea temperature warming.

Sincerely, David L. Ballantine