



BUSINESSES CALL FOR A MORATORIUM ON DEEP SEABED MINING

The ocean and its ecosystems provide innumerable and important benefits for people and economies across the world, including food, livelihoods, income generation and climate regulation. However, the ocean is already heavily impacted from a multitude of stressors, such as climate change, overfishing, pollution, habitat destruction, acidification, and noise.

Because of its sheer size, the deep sea constitutes the largest contiguous habitat for species and ecosystem diversity on Earth and supports many unique and diverse ecosystem processes necessary for the Earth's natural systems to function. Deep-sea ecosystems have experienced little disturbance from human activities up to now, and we know they are likely to have low levels of resilience. Given the slow pace of deep-sea processes, destroyed habitats are unlikely to recover within human timescales. Therefore, every human disturbance of these vulnerable ecosystems demands the highest precaution.

Extraction of deep seabed minerals – deep seabed mining – would substantially increase the human footprint on these important ecosystems. Next to direct destruction of ecosystems and loss of unique biodiversity and genetic resources when minerals are mined, damage and disturbance is also expected to arise from light, noise, and sediment pollution. Since deep seabed mining would affect areas at a continental scale, it's important not only to consider these risks at a project level but to look at their cumulative impact.

While we know the deep sea is full of life and hosts important planetary processes such as carbon sequestration and other ecological functions, much of it remains yet to be explored and scientifically understood. A healthy ocean is also emerging as crucial in the fight against the climate crisis.

The lack of knowledge and the numerous risks to ocean health, fisheries, sustainable development and to important climate functions, point clearly to the need for precaution. Instead of adding additional stressors, it is imperative that we work toward ocean protection and restoration, to ensure a healthy ocean that can continue to provide social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits for humanity into the future. This is also central to global agreements such as the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the necessary work towards sustainable production and consumption and a healthy ocean, which governments and companies across the world have committed to.

Therefore, scientists, civil society, youth, companies, and political leaders increasingly call for a moratorium on deep seabed mining.

Central arguments include that the environmental, social, and economic risks of deep seabed mining need to be comprehensively investigated. Consequences for ecosystem functioning and impacts upon people, societies and industries depending upon a healthy ocean shall be understood.

Before any potential deep seabed mining occurs, it needs to be clearly demonstrated that such activities can be managed in a way that ensures the effective protection of the marine environment.

All alternatives to deep sea minerals must be explored as a matter of urgency, with a focus on reducing demand for primary metals, transitioning to a resource-efficient, closed-loop materials economy, and developing responsible terrestrial mining practices.

Until these matters are sufficiently addressed, we, the undersigned, support a moratorium on deep seabed mining as a matter of precaution and commit not to source minerals from the deep seabed; to exclude such minerals from our supply chains; and not to finance deep seabed mining activities.

-