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October 20, 2010

File No.: FG/02

The Honourable Gail Shea
House of Commons
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Parliament Buildings, Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Shea:

Re: Protection of Glass Sponge Reefs

I am writing on behalf of the Islands Trust Council and the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee to seek federal protection of the glass sponge reefs in the Strait of Georgia. The glass sponge reefs are in need of urgent protection while we work with your provincial and federal counterparts on the establishment of a National Marine Protected Area for the Salish Sea.

We are delighted with the level of protection given the glass sponge reefs in the Hecate Strait and are strongly advocating for the same or better protection to be provided in the south. Shrimp boats often ply the waters just above Galiano Reef. The area around this reef and others like it should be permanently closed to bottom trawling and any other harmful fisheries.

The Islands Trust is a federation of independent local governments that represents some 25,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area. The Islands Trust Area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres. The Islands Trust has a mandate to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of the province generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the Government of British Columbia.

Thank you for considering this request and we look forward to hearing news of your process to protect the glass sponge reef in all coastal waters.

Yours truly,

Sheila Malcolmson
Chair, Islands Trust Council

pc: Galiano Island Local Trust Committee
Members of the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities
Sabine Jessen, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Islands Trust website

Preserving **Island** communities, culture and environment

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis