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Ecosystems IV: Mobility & Energy Intensive Industries
I.1 – Energy Intensive Industries and Raw Materials

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GROW.I.1/HCV

steven.trent@ejfoundation.org

Subject: NGOs' Concerns Regarding References to Deep Sea Mining in Mario Draghi's Report: The Future of European Competitiveness

Dear Mr. Trent, Dear NGOs' representatives,

Thank you for your letter addressed to President Ursula von der Leyen, expressing concerns regarding references to deep sea mining in the report of Mario Draghi. President von der Leyen asked me to reply to you directly.

We welcome your interest in Mario Draghi's report and take note of your concerns regarding the recommendation that the EU should "carefully explore the potential of environmentally sustainable deep-sea mining."

The position of the Commission on deep-sea mining, as defined in the Joint Communication "Setting the course for a sustainable blue planet - Joint Communication on the EU's International Ocean Governance agenda" adopted in June 2022, remains valid: "there is a broad consensus in the scientific community and among States that knowledge related to deep-sea environment and the impacts of mining are not comprehensive enough to enable evidence-based decision-making to allow for proceeding safely with exploitation. The EU will continue to advocate for prohibiting deep-sea mining until these scientific gaps are properly filled, that it can be demonstrated that no harmful effects arise from mining and, as required under the UNCLOS, the necessary provisions in the exploitation regulations for the effective protection of the marine environment are in place."

Moreover, as you also point out in your letter, this position is reflected in recital 18 of the Regulation (EU) 2024/1252, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council: "In line with the precautionary principle, the Commission should not recognise deep sea mining projects as Strategic Projects before the effects of deep-sea mining on the marine environment, biodiversity and human activities are sufficiently researched, the risks are

understood and technologies and operational practices are capable of demonstrating that the environment is not seriously harmed”.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Canton
Head of Unit