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**HAL TAYLOR**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **ALEA Troopers Investigate 9 Traffic Fatalities, 3 Drownings and Zero Boating Fatalities During Record-Breaking Fourth of July Travel Period**

**MONTGOMERY** – Over the course of an extended five-day enforcement period, Troopers with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) investigated a total of nine traffic fatalities and three non-boating fatalities (drownings). However, this was the third year in a row where the state experienced zero boating related fatalities on Alabama waterways.

The official Fourth of July travel period began at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 3, and ended at midnight Sunday, July 7, with AAA forecasting a record-breaking travel period this year, exceeding pre-pandemic numbers. The traffic fatalities occurred in Calhoun, Conecuh, Crenshaw, Cullman, Escambia, Jackson, Marshall and Tuscaloosa counties with Wednesday, July 3, being the only zero-fatality day. Of those killed, six were drivers, one was a passenger and two were motorcyclists. Both motorcyclists were using helmets at the time of their crashes, but only one person of the seven traveling in vehicles equipped with seat belts was buckled up at the time of the crash. The three drownings occurred at Oak Mountain State Park in Shelby County, Wheeler Lake in Morgan County and Palmetto Creek in Baldwin County.

ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said, “Unfortunately, this holiday period ended in tragedy for 12 individuals and their loved ones, which we extend our deepest condolences. For law enforcement, this number is a stark reminder that our job is never done. While I commend all of our officers and the state’s first responders who worked tirelessly over the holiday away from their families, I also pledge to the public that our Agency will continue our mission of protecting and serving by conducting high-visibility enforcement details and providing educational opportunities to combat dangerous driving and boating habits and reduce such tragedies.”

Over the holiday, ALEA Troopers conducted numerous driver license checkpoints and participated in national campaigns such as Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over and Operation Dry Water, in an intensified effort to reduce crashes, deter speeding and remove impaired drivers from Alabama’s roadways and waterways. Troopers assigned to ALEA’s Highway Patrol Division investigated 206 traffic crashes, made 48 DUI arrests, issued 2,429 citations for speeding, and issued 1,211 citations for seat belts and/or improper child restraints. Troopers assigned to ALEA’s Marine Patrol Division investigated 14 boating incidents, made 14 BUI arrests, issued 206 Marine Safety citations and issued 852 Marine Safety Warnings. Troopers also conducted 671 vessel inspections and patrolled 36 marine related events across the state, many of which were firework shows over the water.

ALEA’s Department of Public Safety Director, Colonel Jonathan Archer said, “I echo Secretary Taylor’s comments: our jobs are never done. With the increase in summer activities and travel, it is imperative that safety remains a top priority for everyone. Please remember to wear your seat

belts, put down your phone and other distractions, and never operate a vehicle or boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Our Troopers will continue to work diligently to enforce traffic and boating laws to protect the lives of all Alabamians and its visitors. We are continuing our '101 Days of Summer Safety' educational campaign and the Rescue Swimmer Detail on the Gulf Coast. We will kick off Rural Road Safety Awareness Week on July 15th, and then we will also be joining our neighbors in Georgia for a joint safety initiative known as 'Operation Southern Slow Down' on the same day to focus on speeding and reckless driving.”

Additionally, ALEA’s Aviation Unit, in conjunction with Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Fire Departments, participated in the Rescue Swimmer Detail on Thursday, July 4 through Monday, July 8. During this time, Aviation performed 12 patrol flights, responded to four calls for service, and performed 10 practice deployments of the Rescue Swimmers.

The Agency would also like to remind beachgoers that while Hurricane Beryl made landfall in Texas and is now a Tropical Depression, the threat for strong rip currents along the Gulf of Mexico remains high, even in Alabama. Please swim with caution and check local surf and weather conditions. Beachgoers visiting Orange Beach and Gulf Shores may sign up to receive daily beach conditions and the beach warning flag status by texting ALBEACHES to 888777.

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