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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ALEA: ‘Drive to Arrive’ this Fourth of July Weekend**

**MONTGOMERY** – As the Fourth of July holiday weekend nears, Troopers within the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency’s (ALEA) Highway Patrol and Marine Patrol Divisions are expecting a tremendous number of citizens to travel on the state’s roadways and enjoy its waterways. As citizens prepare for festivities near and far, Troopers want to remind everyone to be courteous and keep safety in mind.

ALEA’s Secretary Hal Taylor said, “This year, we have focused on encouraging citizens to be fully prepared before leaving for their destination. Be sure to inspect and evaluate your vehicle, motorcycle, or vessel to ensure everything is in proper working order before you leave. Prevention and planning can spare you from having to deal with the consequences of a breakdown later, or even worse, a crash.”

In addition to checking your vehicle or motorcycle, be sure to utilize good driving behaviors while traveling upon Alabama’s roadways. It is imperative that the task of driving has your full attention. With the increased use of smartphones and other devices, driving distracted has become a significant issue that can only be addressed and resolved with your help, which is why we are asking everyone to put the cell phones down and avoid any activity that diverts your attention from driving. Following too closely in conjunction with excessive speeding, are two of the leading factors for crashes in Alabama. We encourage all citizens to slow down and allow for a safe and sufficient amount of distance between your vehicle and the one ahead to allow for sudden or emergency braking, especially when roadways are wet.

“If you run into a summer storm over the holiday weekend, please slow down and be patient and courteous to other motorists. Precipitation affects safety by reducing the driver’s visibility, reducing friction on the roadway surface and it can obstruct lanes of travel,” said Secretary Taylor. “We want everyone to ‘drive to arrive,’ and remember traffic laws which also help protect yourself and others.”

The recent increase in crashes stemming from a variety of moving violations was one of the driving factors behind the Alabama Legislature’s most recent amendment to the construction zone law. Effective, Thursday, July 1, the fine for any moving traffic violation committed in a construction zone where workers are present will result in a \$250 fine or double the regular fine, whichever amount is greater. Not only does this law include speeding, but it also includes other violations such as driving under the influence, following too closely, changing lanes without signaling and driving around barricades.

Other laws, which will be fully enforced by ALEA Troopers, include Alabama's Move Over Law which requires motorists to make a lane change when approaching emergency or recovery vehicles, or slow down to a reasonable speed if they are not able to safely change lanes. In fact, this year, Troopers kicked-off the holiday weekend enforcement details by partnering with the Mississippi Highway Patrol and Louisiana State Police in a safety initiative known as "10-8 on 10, One Road, One Mission." The high visibility detail preceded the official Fourth of July travel period which starts at 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 2, and ends at midnight Monday, July 5. The initiative was specifically designed to keep motorists safe while traveling on Interstate 10 ahead of the busy weekend. ALEA Troopers will continue intensified statewide enforcement efforts for all citizens on both the roadways and waterways, and they will combat DUIs and BUIs by participating in national safety campaigns such as Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over and Operation Dry Water (ODW).

"Operation Dry Water is scheduled closely to the Fourth of July holiday every year to educate boaters on the dangers of boating under the influence and reduce the number of accidents on waterways," said Secretary Taylor.

Some of the dangers of consuming alcohol on the water, he added, includes impaired judgment, reduced balance, vision and reaction time. The sun, wind and other weather conditions already produce an effect on boaters known as "boater's fatigue" and the consumption of alcoholic beverages only compounds and intensifies this effect.

All citizens should be advised that individuals under the age of 21 are prohibited from the possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages and alcohol is not allowed on vessels operating on waterways that fall within dry counties or where the possession of alcoholic beverages is prohibited. Boaters should check with their local jurisdictions prior to taking alcoholic beverages along.

"We also understand that many individuals will be out on the water at night to enjoy firework displays. Please keep the same concept of 'drive to arrive' in mind and slow down and be courteous when operating a vessel at night so that you and your passengers arrive safely to the dock or your destination," said Secretary Taylor. "I wish everyone a Happy Independence Day, and I hope we all will do our part to make this a safe holiday for all."