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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ALEA's Marine Patrol Division Reminds Citizens to 'Be the G.O.A.T in Your Boat' and Wear Your PFD**

*Operation Dry Water marks the Fourth of July Holiday Weekend*

**MONTGOMERY--** As the Fourth of July holiday weekend draws near, Troopers with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's (ALEA) Marine Patrol Division anticipate a tremendous number of citizens to come and enjoy one of Alabama's beautiful waterways. As citizens prepare for the excitement and festivities both near and far, Troopers would like to remind everyone to be courteous, but most importantly to keep safety in mind.

"Our goal is to protect those in the communities we serve and to ensure that recreational boaters, paddlers, fishermen, and others who visit our waters are able to enjoy their time with family and friends safely," said ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor. "Each year, our Agency joins law enforcement agencies across the nation in a safety initiative known as Operation Dry Water (ODW). This safety campaign is scheduled closely to every Fourth of July holiday in an effort to educate boaters on the dangers of boating under the influence and reduce the number of crashes on Alabama's waterways."

With this year's Independence Day falling on a Monday, the holiday travel period will encompass the entire weekend, beginning at 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 1, and ending at midnight Monday, July 4. ALEA's Marine Patrol Division developed a new slogan to provide boaters with an easy and fun way to remember an extremely serious topic "Be the G.O.A.T (Greatest of All Time) in Your Boat and wear your PFD."

"We want everyone who decides to enjoy one of Alabama's waterways this Fourth of July weekend to have the opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves. However, everyone's excitement and enthusiasm must be partnered with preparation and responsibility. Recently, we have seen far too many tragic events on Alabama waterways, which is why our Agency is so dedicated and passionate about boater safety as well as education," said ALEA's Director of Public Safety Colonel Jimmy Helms.

Chief Steve Thompson of ALEA's Marine Patrol Division agreed and said, "Our goal is to ensure that everyone can have a safe experience while on an Alabama waterway. We will continue to focus on and share important information with citizens as well as the visitors who plan to celebrate Independence Day in our state. Our Marine Patrol Troopers will be using targeted enforcement tactics as they patrol across the state's waterways this holiday weekend. If

you are found operating a vessel under the influence, you will be arrested and taken to jail. There will be zero tolerance.”

“Safety and preparation are two fundamental characteristics that we all utilize in everyday life, but these are especially essential when you are operating a vessel or participating in any type of water-related activity,” added Secretary Taylor. “It only takes a second, for an exciting trip to the lake or beach to turn into a tragedy, that could ultimately cost an individual their life. Situational awareness is key but being fully prepared while on the water is a necessity. It is imperative that everyone uses a U.S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) while in or near the water. In law enforcement we use the term “Expect the Unexpected,” and we encourage citizens and visitors of Alabama to do the same, especially while on the water. Anything can happen, an individual could slip and fall from a vessel and be beneath the waters’ surface in a matter of seconds. PFDs save lives and that is exactly what we want this upcoming Fourth of July holiday weekend.”

Lastly, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency would like to remind all boaters to keep a close eye on the weather and check for updates on weather conditions with your trusted news source. If you encounter a summer storm over the holiday weekend, please be patient and avoid being on the water if any type of significant weather is in the area. Storms and precipitation affect a variety of the elements that must be in place to safely operate a vessel.

For additional information and boating safety tips, please visit [www.alea.gov](http://www.alea.gov).

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