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News Release

Issued: July 7, 2017
For Immediate Release

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Water quality swimming alert lifted for ocean-side site in New Hanover County

CAROLINA BEACH - State recreational water quality officials today lifted a water quality swimming alert at an ocean-side site in New Hanover County.

Subsequent sampling of the site shows that bacteria levels have dropped below the state and Environmental Protection Agency's standards set for swimming and water play.

The alert affected waters at the public beach access at Hamlet Avenue in Carolina Beach. Water samples taken on July 5, showed the site had exceeded the single-sample maximum standard of 104 enterococci per 100 milliliters of water for a Tier 1 high usage site. Subsequent testing on July 7 showed the bacteria level at 10 enterococci per 100 milliliters.

Enterococcus, the organism used for testing, are found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals. While it does not cause illness itself, scientific studies indicate that its presence is closely correlated to the presence of other disease-causing organisms. People swimming or playing in waters with bacteria levels higher than the standards have an increased risk of developing gastrointestinal illness.

Coastal recreational waters in North Carolina are generally clean. However, it is important to continue monitoring them, so the public can be informed of any localized problems. The N.C. Recreational Water Quality Program samples 204 sites in coastal waters of the state, most of them on a weekly basis from April through October.

If you have questions regarding this notice, please contact Erin Bryan-Millush with the Division of Marine Fisheries, Recreational Water Quality Section at 252-808-8153, or Carolina Beach Town Manager Michael Cramer at 910-458-2994.