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BARBARA GARRITY-BLAKE OPPOSES REP. MCELRAFT'S BID TO KILL WATER QUALITY PROTECTIONS

GLOUCESTER –Barbara Garrity-Blake, Democratic candidate for NC House District 13, opposes Rep. McElraft's bid to kill coastal stormwater rules designed to better protect shellfish waters adjacent to new developments. "Three decades of science shows that stormwater runoff is the number one reason coastal waters become polluted," she stated.

"Our elected officials have a responsibility to keep our public trust waters healthy and productive for future generations, yet my opponent is fighting a plan two years in the making and offers nothing in its place."

Rep. Pat McElraft of Emerald Isle is co-sponsor of HB 2138, which would disapprove stormwater requirements slated to go into effect for the twenty coastal counties August 30, 2008.

"A process was in place that provided citizens ample opportunity to review and comment on proposed rules," Garrity-Blake emphasized. "These long-overdue changes went through much public scrutiny, and the majority of citizens were in support of the reforms. Whose interests are being represented by killing it in the end?"

Rep. McElraft has repeatedly called for an economic impact study of the rules, citing construction costs for new developments. "Will her study also account for the cost of doing nothing and allowing our waters to become polluted?" Garrity-Blake asked. "What is the economic impact of compromising our commercial and recreational fishing industries, tourism, Carteret County's marine science industry, and a host of small businesses dependent on the pristine waters of the Crystal Coast?"

Garrity-Blake cited the multi-million dollar waterfront access program she helped launch two years ago. "Why did we invest tax-payer dollars in the waterfront access initiative or the shellfish restoration and oyster hatchery programs if we are simply providing access to polluted waters and contaminated seafood? Any economic impact study must account for the cost of undermining these public investments."

"Our precious waters are the heart of our economy here on the Crystal Coast," Garrity-Blake added. "This is why people live here, move here, and vacation here. Clean water keeps our economy strong."

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