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**MEDIA ADVISORY -- SENATE AND ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEES TO HOLD JOINT HEARING AT SHORE**

LAVALLETTE - On Monday, August 13, the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee will host their annual joint hearing at the Shore.

The committees will hear testimony regarding recycling and disposal of plastic bags and other floatables and their impact on New Jersey's waterways and sea life. Additionally, Dr. Michael Kennish, a professor of marine and coastal sciences at Rutgers University will testify on the health of Barnegat Bay.

"As people from around the state and across the country flock to the Jersey Shore each summer, it becomes ever more apparent that the health of our shorelines, water bodies and marine wildlife are vital to the tourism and economic well-being of this region," said Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, and Chairman of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee. "A recent report from the Rutgers Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences suggests that we have been underestimating the effects of runoff pollution into Barnegat Bay and these chemicals' effects on the Bay's ecosystem and the region's drinking water that is supplied through the Bay.

"For years, we have devoted our joint summer hearing to issues affecting the New Jersey Shore and the Bay, and with these recent findings, I believe it is ever-more essential that we focus our efforts into solutions that will reduce the negative effects that overdevelopment is having on our shore," added Senator Smith. "I look forward to hearing ideas from the experts on possible legislative actions to reduce pollution on one of our state's ecological treasures."

"A trip down the Jersey Shore is a tradition for families not just from the Garden State but from around the country. It is New Jersey's pride and joy and an important resource for the region that must be protected," said Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee Chairwoman, L. Grace Spencer (D-Essex). "The report from the Rutgers Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences is troubling and demands that we pay better attention to determine how severely the Jersey Shore is being impacted by runoff pollution and overdevelopment. I'm looking forward to hearing from Dr. Kennish on the state of Barnegat Bay and our other speakers about how we at the Legislature can help reduce these threats facing our shore, and preserve our beaches as sanctuaries for visitors from and outside the state, and economic engines not just for the region, but the state."

The joint hearing will be held at 10 a.m. at the Lavallette First Aid Building, 1207 Bay Boulevard, Lavallette.