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## **Secretary Dee Freeman Addressed WCFHBA Membership in First Wilmington Speaking Engagement**

WILMINGTON, N.C. – The new Secretary for the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Dee Freeman, made his first public appearance in Wilmington at the Wilmington-Cape Fear Home Builders Association (WCFHBA) Spring Luncheon. The luncheon and general membership meeting was held at the Cape Fear Country Club on Thursday, March 19.

Addressing the WCFHBA membership, Secretary Freeman assured local building industry leaders that DENR will continue its commitment to open communication between both groups. “I will listen and I will hear you. We won’t always agree, but your input will be considered and decisions will be made in the best interest of everyone,” assured Secretary Freeman. “I am a North Carolina native and I am very invested in this state. I am first and foremost a public servant.”

During his speech, Secretary Freeman outlined four items DENR will address under his direction. The first item will be water quality, ensuring best practices such as storm water and drought management. Next, he will focus on air quality by working to find practical and affordable solutions to reducing North Carolina’s emissions. Also on DENR’s agenda is what Secretary Freeman referred to as a “green economy.” He went on to explain, “We want to establish jobs, businesses and industries that are by definition environmentally friendly, especially in the areas of energy and manufacturing.” Finally, DENR will join the Obama Administration’s focus on long-term planning in regards to climate change and how North Carolina can be proactive in response to this issue.

WCFHBA President Jeffery Stokley, Sr. commented on the Secretary's address saying, "I was pleased with what Secretary Freeman shared with us today and look forward to working together to ensure that the building industry is doing all it can to help secure the future of North Carolina's natural resources." He added, "As part of an organization that represents the commercial and residential building industry on the coast, I understand the need for us to work with DNER and keep the lines of communication open as we continue to address on-going issues impacting our members and region."

Secretary Freeman was appointed by Governor Beverly Purdue on January 6 as part of her new cabinet and administration. A native of Lenoir, Secretary Freeman has been a public servant for 36 years managing four N.C. cities including the city of Brevard and the city of Shelby. Secretary Freeman has a Masters in Public Administration from Appalachian State University; a B.S. from N.C. State University; holds a Municipal Administration Certificate from the UNC School of Government; and is has a Credentialed Manager designation from the International City & County Management Association.

The Wilmington – Cape Fear Home Builders Association is a 1,100 member-firm trade association that provides services to its more than 9,500 individual members which enhance their success and stability. The largest trade association in eastern North Carolina, the Association serves as the voice of the building and development industries that strives to advance professionalism and promote community involvement. WCFHBA is recognized as a positive influential force for responsible growth by protecting property rights and the privilege of homeownership.

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