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# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **N.C. Coast Loses Great Friend, Advocate**

**Ocean, N.C.** – The N.C. Coastal Federation has lost a great friend and co-worker, and the coast has lost a forceful advocate.

Jim Stephenson, the federation's policy director and legislative lobbyist, died early today of an apparent stroke or heart attack. He died in Raleigh at an apartment he rented during the legislative session. He was 57.

"We're extremely grateful for the years of service he gave NCCF and for the diligence and focus he brought to his job," said Todd Miller, the federation's executive director. "Not everyone is cut out for lobbying. Jim had the patience and skill to form diverse coalitions and forge meaningful compromises. He was very effective at what he did. Jim was an important friend of our coast and valuable member of the federation's team. We will miss him."

Stephenson joined the federation in 1999 and distinguished himself as an effective lobbyist. He had a canny understanding of the legislative process and worked diligently behind the scenes at the N.C. General Assembly to help pass some of the state's most important coastal environmental bills. His list of legislative accomplishments is long. Stephenson helped push through bills that mandated, for the first time, effective stormwater rules along the coast; that banned giant landfills; that restored oyster habitat; and that kept seawalls and jetties off our beaches.

When the jetty ban was later challenged in the legislature, Stephenson worked even harder to keep that bill bottled up in the N.C. House. Success, he knew, was sometimes measured by what wasn't done.

"I have worked with Jim and watched very closely as he presented legislative goals, strategies and reports to the board," said Bland Simpson, a federation board member who heads the creative writing program and UNC-Chapel Hill. "He carried these important objectives into the public sphere, into the very rough and tumble area of legislative politics, where his

integrity and keen intelligence, his forthrightness, and his great convivial spirit and easygoing manner have all served him quite well.”

Stephenson was also a member of the Marine Fisheries Commission's Habitat and Water Quality Advisory Committee and the Carteret County Beach Commission. Before coming to NCCF, he was the executive director of the Pamlico-Tar River Foundation. A native of Baltimore, he also served as an advisor to Pennsylvania’s governor, providing research and guidance on policy issues.

Stephenson is survived by his wife, Sally Anger of Morehead City.  
Funeral arrangements are yet to be determined.

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***About the North Carolina Coastal Federation:  
“Citizens Working Together for a Healthy Coast”***

*The North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) is the state’s only non-profit organization focused exclusively on protecting and restoring the coast of North Carolina through education, advocacy and habitat restoration and preservation. NCCF headquarters are located at 3609 Highway 24 in Ocean between Morehead City and Swansboro and are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5 pm.*

*The headquarters include NCCF's main offices, the Cape Lookout Coastkeeper office, a gift shop, Nature Library, Weber Seashell Exhibit, ShoreKeeper Learning Center, and adjoining nature trail. The NCCF also operates field offices in Wilmington and Manteo. For more information call 252-393-8185 or check out NCCF's website at [www.nccoast.org](http://www.nccoast.org)*