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Gov. Shumlin and Climate Change Task Force Deliver Recommendations to White House

MONTPELIER, Vt. – Governor Peter Shumlin and members of the State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience today delivered seventy five recommendations to President Obama about how the federal government can help communities across the country prepare for the impacts of climate change.

“In Vermont, our experience recovering from Tropical Storm Irene taught us that we can’t wait another day to prepare for more extreme weather patterns,” said Governor Shumlin. “This Task Force gave leaders from across America an opportunity to tell Administration officials that climate change has already arrived in our communities, and that federal agencies must help us invest in becoming more resilient.”

President Obama convened the Task Force in December 2013 as part of his Climate Action Plan. Governor Shumlin was one of seven U.S. governors appointed to participate, along with fourteen mayors, two county commissioners and two tribal leaders. Leaders met together four times in Los Angeles, Des Moines Iowa and Washington D.C. during the last year.

The report’s recommendations, presented to Vice President Joe Biden and senior White House officials today at the White House, cover a range of topics, including how federal agencies can help states, communities and tribal areas make infrastructure more resilient to extreme weather, how they can better assist areas hit by disasters to recover even stronger and be more prepared for future events, how water and other natural resources can be protected from harm caused by climate change, and how impacts on public health can be prevented and managed.

The recommendations delivered by the Task Force include those related to Vermont’s experience with Irene. For example, the Task Force recommended the removal of “barriers to rebuilding for future climate resilience,” which came out of Vermont’s Irene experience and the work the Shumlin administration has done to get FEMA to fully reimburse towns for investments in properly sized culverts and bridges. To see the full report and all the recommendations, [CLICK HERE](#).

“The Obama Administration understands how important partnerships across all levels of government will be as we assess what’s coming, evaluate our risks, and take steps to ensure that our communities can continue to thrive even as climate change occurs,” said Sue Minter, Deputy

Secretary of the Agency of Transportation. Minter chaired a work group on disaster recovery and resilience during the process along with Mayor Karen Weitkunat of Fort Collins, Colorado.

The recommendations delivered to the Obama Administration today offer guidance on how the Federal Government should modernize programs and policies to incorporate climate change, incentivize and remove barriers to community resilience, and provide useful, actionable information and tools.

“Local leaders confronting historic droughts, severe storm damage, extreme heat and power outages are learning many lessons about what it takes to get out ahead of the curve,” said Deb Markowitz, Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, who facilitated discussions on how to make federally funded facilities more resilient and energy efficient. “Governor Shumlin and other Task Force members drew directly from their own experience as they thought about how federal programs could be improved to lend more support for the challenges ahead.”

The Task Force report recommends that a senior Administration official be appointed to oversee implementation of the report’s recommendations and that the Administration report back to Task Force members on progress.

“Communities that get ready today to prevent and manage the worst climate risks – whether from storm damage or wildfires – will help keep their people safe and their economies sound even as climate change occurs,” said Shumlin. “President Obama and his cabinet know how important federal government partnership and assistance is in helping us do that.”

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