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To: Coriell, Scott
Subject: Frozen water pipes affecting communities and homes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2015

Frozen water pipes affecting communities and homes

WATERBURY – With a growing number of communities having experienced water main breaks over the past week and other communities reporting frozen underground water pipes affecting a number of individual customers, Vermont state agencies are ready to provide assistance to communities that may need resources, Gov. Peter Shumlin and Public Safety officials announced today.

Communities that need resources in dealing with a water emergency or any other emergency should call the Vermont Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (DEMHS) Watch Officer at 800-347-0488. The line is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If needed, DEMHS can work with towns to coordinate state agency support from the Agency of Transportation, the Agency of Human Services, the Department of Health or the Agency of Natural Resources.

On Wednesday DEMHS took an informal survey of communities to gauge how many have had problems with frozen water pipes – either service lines to private homes or municipal mains. About 26 have reported some sort of issue. Towns with reported issues include Barre, Bethel, Bristol, Burlington, Bennington, Cambridge, Chittenden, Clarendon, Fair Haven, Groton, Jamaica, Jeffersonville, Lyndonville, Manchester, Pawlet, Randolph, Richmond, Rutland, St. Albans, South Burlington, Stratton, Swanton, and Wilmington.

Communities and water suppliers have provided some guidance to customers regarding their likelihood of experiencing frozen pipes, and how homeowners may prevent them. This advice is based on the capabilities of each individual water system (for example, some communities have asked customers to keep water running at a trickle, while other systems do not have the capacity to support that.) Please contact your water provider to inquire about what you may be able to do to keep water flowing to your home.

In the event of a water interruption it is always advisable to have extra bottled water in your home as part of a disaster preparedness kit. Some communities have issued boil water notices and so it is advisable to have clean water on-hand.

Residents should monitor local media and social media for boil water notices or any other alerts. Notices are also often issued through Vermont Alert; sign up for a free account at <http://vtalert.gov>.

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