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Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2016 2:16 PM
To: Coriell, Scott
Subject: Gov. Shumlin Updates on Testing Results from Pownal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2016

Gov. Shumlin Updates on Testing Results from Pownal

MONTPELIER – Test results received today from a municipal well in Pownal show levels of PFOA that are slightly above the advisory level set by the Vermont Department of Health. Three samples taken from the Fire District #2 municipal water source in Pownal – which serves up to 450 residents – showed PFOA levels of between 26 and 27 parts per trillion (ppt). Those results are slightly above an advisory PFOA level of 20 ppt that has been set by the Department of Health.

Because the results indicated PFOA levels slightly above the advisory level, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is advising impacted residents to stop drinking the water.

DEC is arranging for drinking water distribution to residents whose homes are on the affected municipal source. Water will be made available to anyone who wants it, regardless of age, starting tomorrow. Water will be available at the fire station between 3-7 p.m. tomorrow. Additional logistical details will be provided when available. DEC is working to determine the best way to address the low levels of PFOA in the drinking water.

PFOA is a possible carcinogen. Following news reports of potential PFOA contamination in Hoosick Falls, N.Y., Vermont tested public and private wells in North Bennington surrounding the former Chem Fab plant. The public wells in North Bennington and Bennington are not impacted, but about 90 private wells in the area have shown PFOA levels over 20 ppt.

After the testing in North Bennington was underway, DEC officials were contacted by a number of residents about possible dumping at a former manufacturing site in Pownal located at the former Warren Wire Plant #1. DEC worked with the EPA to collect samples last week from a well that is located about 1,000 feet from that site. Given the low levels of PFOA present in the results received today, it is not likely the contamination is more widespread in Pownal. However, DEC officials will collect additional water and soil samples in the area in the coming days.

PFOA is an emerging containment. It is not a chemical that is tested for in standard water tests or listed on a list of hazardous chemicals under federal law that require management. There is no at-home test that detects PFOA. The test for PFOA requires samples be sent out-of-state. PFOA can be harmful when ingested, but it is not absorbed through the skin if present in water used for washing.

Between 2013 and 2015, 10 municipal supplies around Vermont were sampled for PFOA and other emerging chemicals. PFOA was not detected in any of those wells, including Bennington, Barre City, Brattleboro, Burlington, Jay Peak Basin Complex, Lyndonville, Rutland City, Shaftsbury, South Burlington and Winhall Stratton Fire District 1.

A community meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 28, at 6:00 p.m. in the American Legion Hall. Vermont DEC and Health officials and others will be on hand to answer questions. If residents have questions or concerns or need water because they are connected to the Pownal Fire District #2 supply, they should call 2-1-1.

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