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To: Coriell, Scott

Subject: Gov. Peter Shumlin, Vermont Emergency Officials Update on Winter Storm and Power Outages

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Peter Shumlin, Vermont Emergency Officials Update on Winter Storm and Power Outages

WATERBURY, Vt. – Gov. Peter Shumlin, state emergency officials and representatives from the utility companies urged Vermonters to use caution in the wake of the latest winter storm, which has left tens of thousands of Vermonters without power across the state. While utility crews are working nonstop, the Governor warned that some Vermonters may be without power into the weekend due to the second round of heavy snowfall overnight.

“We’re urging Vermonters to continue using caution and doing what they do best in times like these: Looking out for one another, checking in on their neighbors and making sure everyone is ok,” the Governor said. “The second round of snow last night has increased power outages statewide, and while crews are working as fast as possible to get the lights turned on, it’s going to take some time. We’re keeping a close eye on the situation and the state will provide any assistance necessary to help Vermonters affected by this storm.”

As of 10:30 a.m., over 30,000 Vermonters were without power after the storm intensified overnight. While outages are occurring statewide, Addison, Chittenden, Rutland, Washington and Windsor have the highest number. According to Green Mountain Power, over 90,000 customers have lost power since Tuesday. Power has been restored to 68,000 customers, and as of 10:30 a.m. this morning there were 24,000 still without power. Outages keep coming as tree branches weighted down by wet, heavy snow continue to fall on power lines. Over one thousand people are working this storm for GMP, including 462 line workers.

The Vermont Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security has been coordinating with other state agencies and utilities to ensure everyone has the state resources they need to restore services as soon as possible. DEMHS and its partners at VTrans, State Police, and others are lending assets and services to get Vermonters basic services back.

“DEMHS and its partners across state government and the private sector have been working together since the storm approached,” DEMHS Director Joe Flynn said. “While it’s primarily at this point a utility type event, the state has been lending support wherever possible to those working to restore services this week.”

VTrans crews and equipment have been out in force since before the first flakes hit the ground, working to keep roughly 6,000 miles of roadways clear despite changing conditions and variable snow, sleet and freezing rain. VTrans has deployed 250 primary plow trucks plus tow plows. All 25 reserve trucks have been deployed in addition to graders and other specialized equipment. Crews have been working for roughly 55 hours straight since 4:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.

“We are working to stay on top of snowfall, and also working with chainsaws and mowers on downed trees throughout Vermont,” said Transportation Secretary Brian Searles. “We are working closely with the utilities to help ensure mobility for line repair crews. A marathon storm event like this one takes a heavy toll on equipment and our team has been doing admirable work to keep the fleet on the road at full strength.”

SAFETY MESSAGES:

- Never touch a downed power line...it could be charged and injure you
- Make sure trees and debris are clear of any lines as contact can also lead to electrocution
- If using a generator, run it outdoors in a well-ventilated area. Ensure it cannot vent back into living areas – Exhaust can cause Carbon Monoxide poisoning which could be lethal
- Make sure all exterior heating vents are clear and operating properly – A blocked vent means exhaust can come back into living areas causing Carbon Monoxide poisoning.
- Slow down
- Remove ALL snow and ice from your car – It can impede visibility and fly off on the road and create a hazard

LINKS FOR IMPORTANT WEATHER AND SAFETY INFORMATION:

- National Weather Service Albany (Forecast office for Bennington and Windham counties): <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/aly/>
- National Weather Service Burlington (Rest of Vermont): <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/btv/>
- Road conditions: www.511vt.com
- VT DEMHS on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vermontemergencymanagement>
- VT DEMHS on Twitter: @vemvt ... <https://twitter.com/vemvt>
- Vermont 511 on Twitter: @511vt ... <https://twitter.com/511VT>
- VTrans on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/VTrans/143848835653728>
- Vermont State Police on Twitter: @VTStatePolice ... <https://twitter.com/VTStatePolice>
- Vermont State Police on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VermontStatePolice>
- NWS Burlington: <https://www.facebook.com/US.NationalWeatherService.Burlington.gov> on Facebook or @NWSBurlington on Twitter
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