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Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 3:50 PM
To: Coriell, Scott
Subject: Gov. Shumlin Statement on Senate Approval of Marijuana Legalization Bill

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 24, 2016

Gov. Shumlin Statement on Senate Preliminary Approval of Marijuana Legalization Bill

MONTPELIER – Gov. Peter Shumlin issued the following statement after the Senate gave preliminary approval to a bill to legalize marijuana in Vermont. The vote was 16 in favor, 13 against.

“I want to thank the Senate for their courage in voting to end the failed War on Drugs policy of marijuana prohibition. When this debate began a month and a half ago, there were many who said it had no chance of passage in either chamber. Today it passed the Senate. This is a big moment for Vermont that should give Vermonters faith that our democracy still works. I want to thank Senator Jeanette White for starting this important conversation and Senator Dick Sears for his leadership in drafting the bill that passed today. I also want to thank all the committees that thoroughly vetted this proposal to make it stronger. And I want to thank Senate President Pro Tem John Campbell for ensuring this bill received a fair hearing, despite our disagreement on the policy.

“With over 80,000 Vermonters admitting to using marijuana on a monthly basis, it could not be more clear that the current system is broken. I am proud that the Senate took lessons learned from states that have gone before us, asked the right questions, and passed an incredibly thoughtful, common-sense plan that will bring out of the shadows an activity that one in seven Vermonters engage in on a regular basis. The shadows of prohibition have prevented our state from taking rational steps to address marijuana use in our state. This bill will allow us to address those important issues by driving out illegal drug dealers, doing a better job than we currently do of keeping marijuana out of the hands of underage kids, dealing with the drugged drivers who are already driving on our roads, addressing treatment, and educating Vermonters to the harmful effects of consuming marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes.

“Now is the time to move forward with ending the failed policy of prohibition in Vermont. I am proud of the Senate for taking the lead and I look forward to working with the House to get a bill to my desk.”

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