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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 15, 2015

Gov. Shumlin Announces \$1.9 Million in Clean Energy Investments in Windham County

BRATTLEBORO – Gov. Peter Shumlin today announced two new clean energy investments in Windham County totaling \$1.9 million. The funds are made available through a 2013 agreement with Entergy and will help increase efficiency, save Windham County schools, municipalities, and homeowners on heating bills, and spur economic activity and job growth.

Through the Public Service Department's Clean Energy Development Fund, \$1.6 million has been awarded to the Brattleboro based Sustainable Energy Outreach Network (SEON). SEON will be working with Building Green, the Windham Regional Commission, the Northern Forest Center, and other businesses and organizations to offer "Windham Wood Heat," a program to provide for the installation of wood pellet/chip heating systems for schools and municipal buildings in Windham County. The Governor made today's announcement at the Academy School in Brattleboro, which will work with the Windham Wood Heat Program to switch to a new wood pellet boiler system that will reduce their fossil fuel use and save money for the school.

SEON was selected through a competitive bid process to lead the project, and among the goals set out by the Clean Energy Development Fund are maximizing the number of wood heating systems installed, and leveraging the program's activity with complementary energy efficiency measures to increase energy savings.

"Today we are advancing the effort to move to clean, local and affordable energy in Vermont by investing in renewable biomass heating for Windham County schools and public buildings," said Gov. Shumlin. "Not only are these investments good for the environment, but they will save money for taxpayers on heating costs at our schools and municipal buildings."

"Windham County has the potential to become an extraordinary regional hub of advanced wood heating technology, professional development, and fuel supply and delivery," said SEON Executive Director Guy Paine. "Our project team will be assisting with energy efficiency and fuel switching, developing greater mechanical capacity in high-efficiency wood-based heating, and contributing to the overall transformation of this region's economy."

Also through the Clean Energy Development Fund, \$300,000 will be made available in Windham County to support solar loans for residential projects. Working with VSECU's

Brattleboro Branch, the funds will help reduce interest rates for borrowers seeking to finance solar projects for their homes. The program is income-sensitive, and will provide greater support for borrowers with incomes under 120 percent of Windham median income.

“We are making smart use of clean energy funds by buying down interest rates for Windham County residents who want to put solar panels on their roof or in their yard, making solar even more affordable and accessible,” Shumlin added.

“VSECU is pleased to accept the award of the Windham County Solar Finance Program grant, which we will use to enhance our existing VGreen loan program and bring even greater savings on solar PV or solar hot water installations to residents of Windham County,” said Lori Fielder, VSECU VGreen Program Director. “Loans will feature an interest rate buy-down which will be variable based on household income, to all eligible applicants. VSECU welcomes this opportunity to work with the CEDF, Department of Public Service, local solar installers and community solar providers to offer easy, affordable solar financing to Vermonters in Windham County. Anyone who lives or works in Vermont can become a member of VSECU, and the Brattleboro branch services our Windham County members.”

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