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Sent: Thursday, July 28, 2016 2:24 PM
Subject: Gov. Shumlin Announces Clean Water for Pownal

For Immediate Release
July 28, 2016

Gov. Shumlin Announces Clean Water for Pownal

Montpelier —Today Gov. Peter Shumlin lifted the “Do Not Drink” order for Pownal’s municipal drinking water system, Fire District Number Two. The system had been contaminated with slightly elevated levels of the possible carcinogen PFOA. Results this week show that a new treatment system is effectively removing all PFOA from the town’s drinking water.

Governor Shumlin will hold an event on Monday at 3:30pm to acknowledge the milestone and community members involved in achieving clean water again. The gathering will be held at the site of the town’s supply well and treatment system at 735 Route 346 in Pownal.

PFOA was found at 26 and 27 parts per trillion in Pownal’s Fire District Number Two municipal drinking water system this past March after investigating a local tip. The Vermont Department of Health has set a health advisory limit of 20 parts per trillion for PFOA in drinking water. More than 400 users of the water system have been using bottled water as a temporary drinking source until a solution was found.

“Today’s announcement means the people of the Pownal can return to their everyday life as it was before this disruption,” states Governor Shumlin. “Community members here have stepped up to the plate in true ‘Vermont Strong’ fashion, and now we’re drinking clean water again only four months later.”

The contamination likely originated from the former Warren Wire facility in Pownal, now owned by Associated Premier Underwriters (APU). APU paid for drinking water sampling and bottled water for the community while a new water treatment system was brought online.

A granular activated carbon filtration system was placed in service to treat contaminated water on July 12. All water pumped from the town’s water supply well is treated by the carbon filters before entering distribution. The filters bind PFOA to carbon particles.

APU continues to work with the State to conduct a site investigation and consider remedial options.

The State continues work in Bennington and North Bennington to address PFOA contamination. To date, 483 private drinking water wells have been tested; 249 have PFOA levels above 20 parts per trillion. In Shaftsbury, PFOA was recently discovered at 25 parts per trillion at the town’s closed landfill and additional drinking water testing is occurring within a quarter mile of the site.

"Ensuring safe drinking water is one of the most important things people count on their government to do," said Alyssa Schuren, Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner, "I thank all the state, local and private officials, as well as many volunteers, who brought the clean municipal system online so quickly."

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