

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 2011

**Lt. Governor Phil Scott and Commerce Secretary Lawrence Miller
announce work plan and funding for mobile home removal**

Montpelier, VT – Lt. Governor Phil Scott and Secretary of Commerce and Community Development Lawrence Miller, who have been leading a task force to organize coordinated and affordable removal of flood-damaged mobile homes, today announced a work plan for that project, as well as some unexpected good news for homeowners: thanks to successful fundraising, the cost to each individual homeowner will be less than expected.

When the group initially announced the program in September, the anticipated cost to each homeowner who enrolled was \$1,500 – a substantial savings over the typical removal cost, which ranged from \$3,500-\$4,500 for older homes. The group was able to achieve these savings by creating “economies of scale” whereby demolition contractors would work on several homes at the same location at the same time. Thanks to an outpouring of donations after that announcement, the task force is now able to offer a \$1,500 credit to each homeowner – making the removal service essentially free.

“With the large donations that have come in from groups like Aubuchon Hardware, the Argosy Foundation and Ben and Jerry’s, and with the help of the Vermont Community Foundation to raise yet more funds, we’re at a point where we’re confident announcing that the program will, in fact, come at no cost to mobile home owners,” said Secretary Miller, who worked closely with VCF on fundraising efforts.

Lt. Governor Scott, who has worked with the Associated General Contractors of Vermont to organize contractor teams, added that the task force is now ready to begin demolition at Weston’s Mobile Home Park in Berlin, which had the highest number of substantially damaged mobile homes after Irene. Approximately 70 homes at Weston’s were damaged in the flood, and the task force believes about a dozen of those homeowners will take advantage of this removal program.

Pre-construction meetings with homeowners will take place next week. Any Weston’s resident who is interested in taking advantage of this program will need to attend one of the following sessions, to be held at the park:

Monday, October 24, 2:00 PM
Monday, October 24, 5:00 PM
Wednesday, October 26, 4:00 PM

At these meetings, task force representatives will explain the process and make sure that each homeowner has completed all of the steps required to proceed with removal. First and foremost, homeowners need to have completed the FEMA grant process and be satisfied with their awards, since FEMA requires that the individual still own their home in order to receive financial assistance. Homeowners also need to produce evidence of title, show written consent from any lenders holding a lien on their home, be in good tax standing with their town, and sign a general release form.

Contractors will begin demolition at Weston's starting Monday, October 31.

For residents of other flooded mobile home parks, information packets will be mailed out early next week, and homeowners will have until November 15 to register for the program. People can register or get more information by calling the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity at (802) 660-3455, ext. 204.

Demolition teams will be mobilized for each of those parks as soon as all interested homeowners have completed the required paperwork and the FEMA application process.

"I'm anxious to move forward on this project, as are all of the affected homeowners," said Lt. Governor Scott. "Recovery from a disaster as large as Irene takes a lot of time, money, and patience – all of which we're running out of as winter approaches. We wanted to expedite removal of these homes and make it as cost-effective as possible, so that mobile homeowners could be given a clean slate to put a new home on their lot," he said.

"I'd also like to thank my partners on this task force: Secretary Miller, the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, the Vermont Community Foundation, the Associated General Contractors of Vermont, and the law firm of Downs Rachlin Martin," Scott said. "We brought the right people together to get the job done."

###

For more information, please contact:

Nancy Driscoll
Chief of Staff, Lt. Governor Phil Scott
nancy.driscoll@state.vt.us
Office: 802-828-2226
Cell: 802-734-7555