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Vermont Federal Disaster Declaration Approved

MONTPELIER – Gov. Peter Shumlin today announced that President Barack Obama has signed a major disaster declaration for Addison, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Rutland, Windsor, and Washington counties. Those 10 counties suffered nearly \$4-million in damages during a severe storm in December that caused widespread power outages.

The Public Assistance disaster declaration allows communities and public utilities in those counties to receive 75% reimbursement for storm response and recovery. Those costs include debris removal and repairs to the power grid, public roads, bridges, and other infrastructure that was damaged during the storm.

“I want to thank the President for approving this assistance for Vermont,” Gov. Shumlin said. “This December storm was hard on tens of thousands of Vermonters, some of whom were in the dark for several days or more. This federal assistance is much needed and much appreciated.”

Communities and municipal and COOP utilities can also be reimbursed for equipment rentals (and fuel for that equipment), the cost of contractor assistance, employee overtime tied directly to storm response and restoration, and other eligible expenses.

The Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security will begin the application process with mandatory applicants’ briefings within the next couple of weeks. The briefings will outline the requirements for receiving federal awards and maximizing eligibility of repairs. The briefing schedule will be announced when finalized.

A Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) identified nearly \$4-million in damages in Vermont during the December 9-12 severe storm. Vermont is only required to show \$1-million in damages to qualify for a declaration. The 10 counties also each showed more than the minimum of \$3.50 per capita required to be included in a declaration. The damages identified in the PDA are only a partial accounting of the total damages suffered in the severe snow storm and the final tally will likely be higher.

The declaration also includes funds from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for towns, agencies and approved non-profit organizations statewide. This program provides

funding for a variety of mitigation activities, including home buyouts, structural elevations, flood proofing and public infrastructure upgrades for roads, bridges and culverts in vulnerable locations.

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