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To: Coriell, Scott
Subject: Gov. Shumlin Updates on Potential Water Contamination in North Bennington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2016

Gov. Shumlin Updates on Potential Water Contamination in North Bennington

MONTPELIER – Test results received this morning indicate that a number of water sources in North Bennington show varying levels of a potentially harmful chemical. The public water supply has been tested and is not affected. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is distributing drinking water to those affected or potentially affected as additional tests are conducted.

The chemical, Perfluorooctanoic (PFOA), is a possible carcinogen. Following news reports of potential PFOA contamination in Hoosik Falls, N.Y., DEC took the proactive step of testing water supplies in North Bennington. Samples from the immediate area of concern were tested, along with the public drinking supply. Results were received this morning that showed the public water supply has not been affected but some residential and commercial wells are.

In Vermont, the standard level of PFOA is 20 parts per trillion. Results from a wastewater treatment plant well – water that is not used for drinking – showed PFOA levels of 618 parts per trillion. A business in the area showed levels of 168 parts per trillion. Results from three residential wells showed a range of 40 parts per trillion to 2,880 parts per trillion.

PFOA is what is known as an emerging contaminant. It is not a chemical that is tested for in standard water tests or listed on a list of hazardous chemicals under federal law that require management. There is no at-home test that detects PFOA. The test for PFOA requires samples be sent out-of-state. DEC has identified potentially four more residential wells that may be affected. Testing is being conducted on those wells and residents are being provided drinking water.

PFOA can be harmful when ingested. It is not absorbed through the skin if present in water used for washing.

Two community meetings have been scheduled. Tomorrow at 4 p.m. at the Bennington Fire Station. And Monday at 6 p.m. during Bennington Town Meeting Day. DEC officials and others will be on hand to answer questions.

If you have questions or concerns or need to request a well be tested, please call 802 249 5324.

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