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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Shumlin Thanks Searles for Years of Service, Appoints Minter as Transportation Secretary

BERLIN, Vt. – Gov. Peter Shumlin announced today that he will appoint Sue Minter to lead the Agency of Transportation effective January 1, 2015. Minter, who currently serves as Deputy Secretary, will take over from Secretary Brian Searles who has been planning to retire and will do so at the end of the year. Chris Cole, currently Director of Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development at VTrans, will replace Minter as Deputy Secretary.

“Brian has been an incredible public servant, trusted adviser and friend to me over the past four years. During his long career in public service, he has made a profound impact on the lives of Vermonters, and we all owe him a debt of gratitude for his many years of dedication to our state,” said Gov. Shumlin.

The Governor continued, “While we’re sad to lose Brian, we could not be more fortunate to have Sue Minter as the new Secretary and Chris Cole as Deputy Secretary. Sue is driven, dedicated and has a proven record of leadership both at VTrans and during Tropical Storm Irene when she served as my Irene Recovery Officer. Thanks to the hardworking employees, VTrans is one of the most effective agencies in state government. I have no doubt that legacy will continue under the new leadership team we’re announcing today.”

The Agency of Transportation has made significant progress in improving Vermont’s transportation infrastructure over the past four years. Accomplishments include:

- In 2008, Vermont ranked near the bottom of all states – 45th in the nation – for numbers of structurally deficient bridges. By 2013 the state ranked 28th.
- The overall percentage of structurally deficient bridges has been cut in half, declining from 19.7 percent in 2008 to just over 8 percent in 2013.
- The percentage of pavement rated in very poor condition has declined from a high of 36 percent in 2008 to only 21 percent in 2013.

Brian R. Searles has served as Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Transportation since January 2011. He previously served in this position from 1999-2003. In 45 years of working in the public sector, Brian has served as a police chief, city manager, airport director and in several other state government positions, all in Vermont. Searles holds a Master of Science in Administration from St. Michael’s College.

Sue Minter has served as Deputy Secretary at VTrans since January 2011. Minter played a leadership role responding to catastrophic flooding from Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011 both with VTrans, and as Shumlin's Irene Recovery Officer, responsible for implementation of all state recovery and resilience activities. In September, 2013, Minter lead a Vermont team to assist the state of Colorado following severe flooding and also supported Governor Shumlin on the White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience as the co-chair of the Disaster Recovery and Resilience Sub Committee. Minter served in the Vermont Legislature for six years, including two years on the House Appropriations Committee and four years on the House Transportation committee. A graduate of Harvard University (BA) and MIT (MA in City Planning), Minter has worked over the past 25 years in the public, private and non-profit sectors, as a professional planner and policy maker at the state, local, and international level.

Chris Cole has served as the Director of the Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development division at the Vermont Agency of Transportation since 2011. Prior to this appointment, he was the General Manager at the Chittenden County Transportation Authority from 2001 to 2011, a public transportation organization serving approximately 50% of the population of Vermont. Chris was previously employed by the Vermont Legislature from 1998 to 2001 as a Fiscal Analyst at the Joint Fiscal Office and prior to that at the New York State Legislature as a policy analyst for the Transportation, Education and Environmental Conservation Committees. Chris attended high school at Vermont Academy in Saxton's River, VT and college at Ithaca College and SUNY Albany. Chris has served on the South Hero School Board and the Planning Commission in South Burlington VT. He has also served on the Board of Directors of various transportation associations, advisory boards and non-profits. Chris lives in Richmond with his wife Leigh Cole, he is the father of two sons both of whom played soccer collegiately for Middlebury College and the University of Vermont.

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