



# **Vermont Recovering Stronger**

## **Irene Recovery Status Report**

**Presented to Governor Peter Shumlin**  
**June 2012**





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Sue Minter, Irene Recovery Officer

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Governor Peter Shumlin  
FROM: Sue Minter, Irene Recovery Officer  
DATE: June, 2012  
RE: Vermont Recovering Stronger

### Introduction

*“On August 28, 2011, Vermont was forever changed. Tropical Storm Irene brought personal loss and public damage unlike anything we have experienced in more than a generation. The rising waters took lives and the incredible damage to homes, property, land and our natural environment is still difficult to comprehend.” - Irene Recovery Report, January 2012.*

Tremendous progress has been made in Vermont’s recovery from Tropical Storm (TS) Irene in the five months since the Irene Recovery Report was written in January. The January report provided an important account of Vermont’s monumental efforts in the immediate response to the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Irene and set forth a blueprint that continues to guide our ongoing efforts. The vast majority of the actions, policies and innovations described in that initial report have been accomplished or are well underway. This Status Report provides an overview of the longer-term efforts that each of these tasks has turned into as well as the new ones that have emerged as we have transitioned more fully from response to recovery. Organized around the same six elements of the recovery established in the first report, this Status Report summarizes the progress since January, presenting key milestones achieved, ongoing activities and challenges that lay ahead, as well as goals for recovery.

The range and depth of recovery efforts all across Vermont continues to be amazing. This report is not intended to be comprehensive or provide detailed descriptions of all that is going on in the recovery, but rather to offer a snapshot showing how far we’ve come, the work underway, and what we see ahead. It is clear that even as recovery continues, new challenges emerge, and there remains a long road ahead to full recovery.

Several key accomplishments in the recovery process bear calling out:

- ❖ **Increasing federal cost share to 90/10.** Perhaps the most important financial achievement of the past four months was winning approval of Governor Shumlin’s request to President Obama to increase the federal cost share for FEMA assistance from 75 to 90 percent, which will have a significant impact on the fiscal stability for towns and reduced burden on the state budget.

- ❖ **Establishing regional recovery committees and case management system.** Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) working in coordination with FEMA funded disaster case managers are fully functioning, providing an infrastructure of support to provide for the unmet needs of individuals and families in all of Vermont's hardest hit communities.
- ❖ **Addressing short and long term housing challenges.** Working together, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, home ownership centers, FEMA and other agencies were able to ensure safe temporary shelter for all displaced Vermonters. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will enable buyouts for the most vulnerable homes, and a combination of several legislative and private efforts have made progress in addressing the unique issues facing mobile homeowners impacted by the flooding.
- ❖ **Relocating state employees and the Vermont State Hospital.** Governor Shumlin and legislative leaders joined together to solve the challenge of relocating 1,500 state employees displaced from the flooded Waterbury State Office Complex, and to direct the permanent relocation of the Vermont State Hospital. The Waterbury State Office Complex will become a model resilient facility and modern workspace.
- ❖ **Planning for resilience from future weather events.** With the passage of flood plain management legislation, increased inter-agency coordination, and the initiation of long term community recovery planning, the state is embarking on developing strategies to help our state adapt to and prepare for future flooding. These efforts extend from mitigating the effect of future flooding on infrastructure and the built environment, to enhancing emergency preparedness planning and trainings at the community and state levels.

Finally, it is worth noting the evolution of and ongoing role of the Irene Recovery Office (IRO) and the Irene Recovery Coordination Team (IRCT). As the only state entity solely focused on the recovery, the IRO has played an important role in managing a wide range of efforts. The hallmark of Vermont's recovery has been—and continues to depend upon—effective partnerships between federal, state, and local entities within both the public and private sectors, including various state agencies, FEMA, Vermont's Congressional delegation, Towns, Regional Planning Commissions, and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The IRCT that convenes on a biweekly basis has helped enable the unprecedented level of interagency collaboration that has been an important factor in the progress achieved so far. Because we have been working to assemble an overview of the recovery as a whole, we have been able to monitor progress, see the gaps between efforts, facilitate collaboration and initiate new efforts where needed. Among the most important ongoing roles is to serve as the state counterpart to FEMA, partnering with them where appropriate and engaging in advocacy to ensure that Vermont communities receive all the federal funding for which they are eligible. While not intended to be permanent, the IRO will need to continue to guide recovery through the end of this year.

# 1. SUPPORTING VERMONTERS AFFECTED BY IRENE

*“Through a network of federal, state, local, non-profit, philanthropic and volunteer organizations, Vermont will provide ongoing assistance to individuals and families affected by Irene. Our efforts will assist Vermonters with both short and long-term challenges, helping them rebuild their lives, and find safe and affordable homes.” - Irene Recovery Report, January 2012*

While tremendous strides have been made in helping Vermonters regain what they lost to this historic storm, there is still much work to be done. Nine months after being driven from their homes, scores of Vermonters are still in temporary, sometimes substandard, housing awaiting a place to call their own. Others remain in their damaged, unsafe homes, including many in mobile homes. Owners of mobile home parks are in the process of rebuilding, mitigating or closing their parks. The loss of housing, particularly that which was affordable to lower income Vermonters, has prevented some survivors from finding permanent housing and returning to their communities. Clearly, unmet housing needs remain. Federal, state and local partners continue to focus on understanding and addressing them, while looking also to long-term recovery solutions.

## Recovery Highlights & Milestones

### Individuals & Families

#### Federal Aid Received:

By the first week of June, FEMA had received 7252 registrations from Tropical Storm Irene and distributed nearly \$22.7 million in grants to families and individuals. The maximum grant of \$30,200 has been awarded to 220 households. In addition, the Small Business Administration has approved \$17.6 million in disaster loans from Irene for homeowners and renters.

#### Recovery Committees Established:

Nine Long Term Recovery Committees<sup>1</sup> (LTRCs) have been established in the most heavily impacted areas to help address the unmet needs of Vermonters affected by Irene after FEMA and other sources of recovery assistance have been exhausted. Through phone banks, mailings and door-knocking campaigns, LTRCs have reached out to all Vermonters who registered with FEMA following Irene and the spring floods. LTRCs are working with FEMA-funded case managers in developing individual recovery plans for survivors.

#### Case Management System in Place:

FEMA awarded Agency of Human Services a Disaster Case Management Grant providing \$2.4 million over the next two years to continue funding disaster case managers to support individuals and families, in concert with the LTRCs. Based on estimates provided by the LTRCs, there were almost 900 open cases of Irene Survivors with unmet needs at the end of May. The actual number changes continuously as cases are closed and new ones are opened. Survivors who previously thought they could manage on their own come forward to ask for assistance. Cases are presented to the Vermont Disaster Relief Fund for additional funds of “last resort” beyond what can be provided locally.

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of the LTRCs, contact information and a map of their service territories, see: <http://www.vermontdisasterrecovery.com/how-to-get-help/ltrcs>.

**Approximate Number of Open Cases  
Being Served by Long Term Recovery Committees – May 2012**

Southeaster Vermont Irene LTRC	280
Rutland County LTRC	70
Central Vermont LTRC	150
Upper Valley Strong LTRC	100
Rebuild Waterbury LTRC	70
Northfield-Roxbury LTRC	37
Mad River Flood Recovery	16
Precision Valley Disaster Recovery Committee	140
Good Night Irene LTRC	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>883</b>

*\*As reported to FEMA by LTRCs in meetings May 24 & 30 or estimated based on April reporting to FEMA.*

Vermont Disaster Relief Fund Providing Assistance:

As of June 9th, the Vermont Disaster Relief Fund has allocated nearly \$875,000 to assist with 73 Irene survivor cases. Approximately half of this funding went directly to mobile home owners from the Pomerleau Cornerstone Fund. The VDRF Allocations Committee meets twice each week to hear requests from Disaster Case Managers (both voluntary case managers and AHS case managers) working directly with the local Long Term Recovery Committees. VDRF is embarking upon a targeted capital campaign to raise additional funds to add to the \$3.8 million already donated. By the end of May, the VDRF had netted over \$160,000 from sales of about 14,300 Vermont Strong plates that have been sold and paid for, with an additional 11,900 plates shipped and invoiced to “retail” partners who are reselling them. VDRF remains committed to reaching the goal of raising \$1,000,000 through this two-year program and will continue to promote the sale of the plates, which will soon be available at the Ben & Jerry's factory store and other locations with a high volume of summer traffic.

Mental Health Support from Starting Over Strong (SOS):

Through a FEMA grant administered by Washington County Mental Health Services in conjunction with other designated mental health agencies and community services, SOS provides

free short-term support for individuals, groups, and communities impacted by Irene. Fifteen crisis counselors in three teams conduct community and home-based outreach, door-to-door counseling, and educational services at group meetings and programs, free of charge throughout the hardest hit areas of the state. Services are provided to individuals and families who are in recovery, as well as to individuals experiencing distress are provided for those in need of more intensive supports. Over 411 individuals have been contacted through door-to-door outreach, and more than 870 individuals have been served in group educational or counseling settings. In addition, educational materials have been disseminated to over 6,500 individuals. The program runs through October 30, 2012.

Creation of vtstrong.vermont.gov:

Identifying the need for a one-stop-shopping portal for Irene related information from the State for a variety of audiences, ACCD created the vtstrong website. This website continues to be updated with current information and resources in recovery.

## Housing Assistance

### Sheltering Survivors:

In the immediate response to the storm, the primary housing goal was to ensure all survivors had access to adequate shelter before winter arrived. The Irene Housing Task Force worked with FEMA to identify all available housing units. The numbers were sufficient and the state determined it was not necessary to request temporary housing units—FEMA trailers—which would not have been well suited for Vermont weather. With the support of volunteer groups, housing and service agencies, and family members, survivors secured temporary housing and did not turn to emergency or existing shelters before the winter arrived.

### Planning for CDBG Funds:

With the assistance of the Congressional delegation, the state secured \$21.7 million of in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. ACCD is currently developing a required Action Plan for use of the funds and a public input process is underway. The funding is to be used to address the most severe unmet needs in the areas of housing, economic recovery and infrastructure. As currently structured, 80% of the funding must be used in Windsor and Washington counties. ACCD's initial request to expand this targeting requirement was denied by HUD. However, as of this writing, it continues to push for the flexibility to use some additional funds for Windham County.

### Supporting Home Buyouts:

The FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) enables homes that have been substantially damaged by disasters to be “bought out” with 75% of the project costs paid by FEMA. Through two rounds of funding to date, the state mitigation committee has recommended 69 separate project applications to FEMA for funding under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the four declared disasters in 2011. These include buyouts of 91 primary homes, 9 non-primary homes and 6 commercial properties to remove them from flood prone areas. The

state is working to supply the 25% nonfederal share of homeowner buy outs, where needed, using CDBG and VHCB funds to pay the majority of the 25% match for the program. In addition to buyouts, HMGP mitigation/planning projects (number of drainage upgrades, planning, stream bank stabilization and other projects) provide planning for long term recovery needs. HMGP projects to date include a federal share of \$18.8 million out of a combined total cost of \$25.2 million. A third round of project selections is anticipated late in 2012 after additional funding is confirmed by FEMA at the 12<sup>th</sup> month point from the Irene disaster declaration.

### Enacted Housing Legislation:

Two important new laws were enacted to address housing needs related to Irene recovery.

- Fair Housing. H. 59 was passed and signed into law, containing provisions recommended by the Irene Recovery Report to prohibit discrimination in land use decisions or the permitting of developments because a proposed development contains affordable housing units.
- Mobile Homes. ACCD worked closely with lawmakers on comprehensive legislation—now Act 137—that brings both immediate and long-term assistance to mobile homeowners, including: sales tax exemptions, financing for the purchase of new mobile homes, and planning for the improved safety and resilience of mobile home parks.

### Increased Assistance to Mobile Home Survivors:

As noted in the Irene Recovery Report, the limited authority of the state and municipalities to condemn mobile homes limited the amount of FEMA Individual Assistance available to owners of destroyed mobile homes. The Governor's general counsel found the necessary legal authority for condemnation within the Governor's emergency powers. In April, FEMA agreed to review eligible cases in order to provide increased assistance up to the maximum Individual Assistance benefit of \$30,200. The state has sent condemnation letters to FEMA for

nearly 110 destroyed mobile homes completing the first phase of the effort, and FEMA is in the process of providing an additional \$600,000 to owners of those homes. In the second phase, FEMA and ACCD are contacting every owner of a damaged mobile home—more than 350—to determine their status. Inspections are conducted by the Department of Public Safety and condemnations issued when appropriate. Many cases are being referred to case managers and the LTRCs for additional assistance.

Displaced Residents Returned to Melrose Place: Six affordable rental apartment buildings were flooded by Irene, leading to the displacement of many elderly and disabled households in Brattleboro. The Brattleboro Housing Authority (BHA) and the town struggled with conflicting information about National Flood Insurance Program requirements and the public housing authority's eligibility for FEMA Public Assistance. The state prompted FEMA to provide additional technical assistance to help sort through options for repairs and relocation of the units in the floodway. Eventually repairs were made and residents returned. A study of options for relocating and redeveloping Melrose Terrace and a neighboring project is now underway.

## **Future Challenges & Activities**

### Assessing Unmet Need:

Assessing the unmet needs of Irene survivors remains a challenge even as the recovery continues. As resources are reported and some cases are closed, survivors who had not yet asked for help come forward and new cases continue to be referred to the LTRCs and Disaster Case Managers. Maintaining outreach to survivors will be necessary through the remainder of the recovery.

### Continuing Support of LTRCs:

The Long Term Recovery Committees were formed with guidance from the FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) team based on best practice for disaster recovery and to enable impacted communities to access the national network of resources available to help survivors.

As the VAL team demobilizes from Vermont over the next two months the IRO will facilitate coordination among the various entities that provide support to the LTRCs, including the VDRF, AHS and Vermont Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), to ensure that the committees are able continue to play their essential role in the recovery.

### Getting Cases into the CAN Database:

The Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) disaster case management database has been adopted by consensus nationwide in long term recovery. It is a goal to utilize CAN in Vermont to facilitate case management for Irene survivors.

### Facilitating Home Rebuilding Projects:

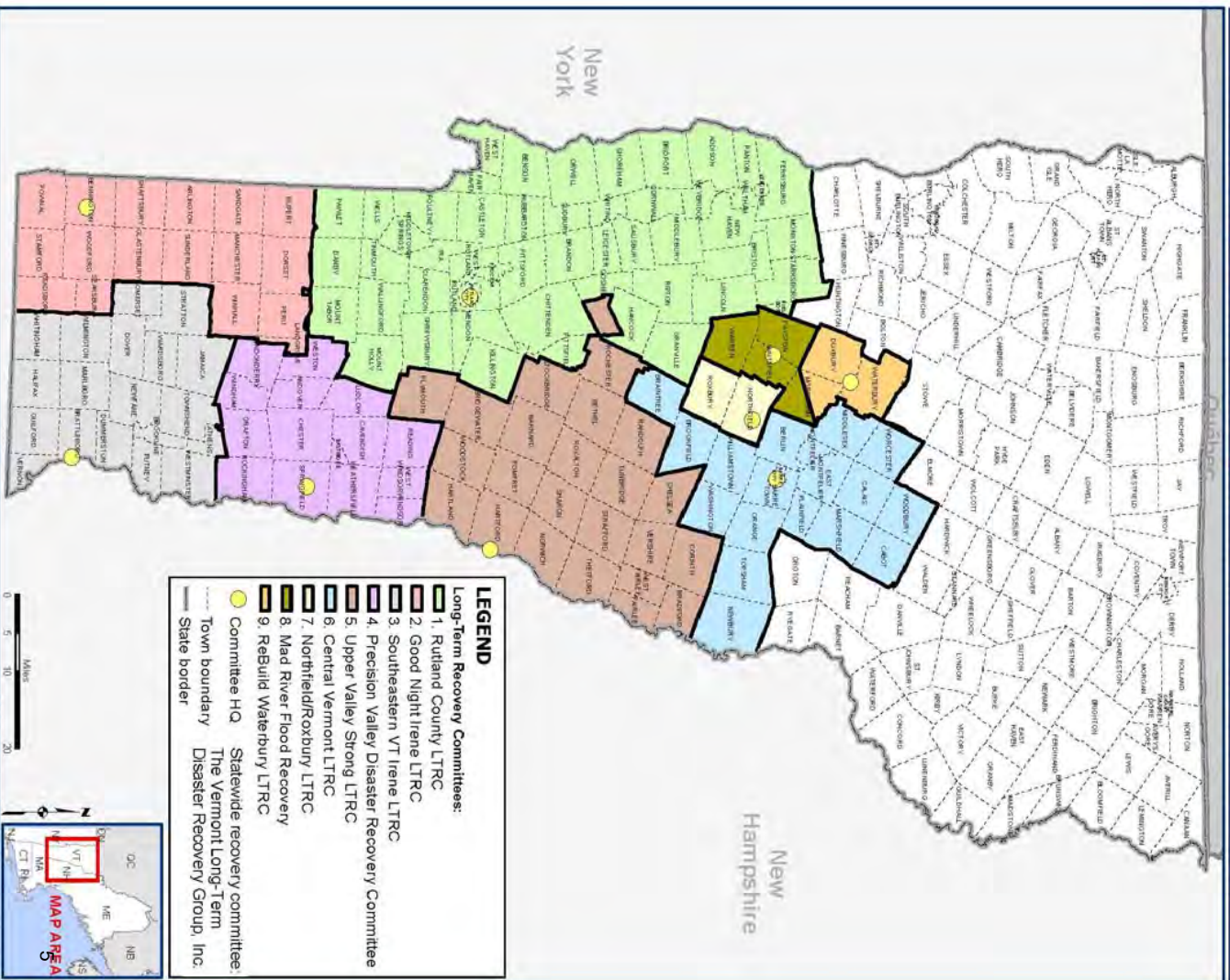
Rebuilding damaged homes for Irene survivors presents a daunting challenge to the Long Term Recovery Committees. A model that has been successfully applied around the country is to tap National VOAD groups that specialize in rebuilding projects. These, primarily faith-based organizations can bring skilled volunteer labor, equipment and often their own financial resources to work for as long as it takes to accomplish the rebuilding. This requires projects to be well organized and “shovel ready”. The Irene Recovery Office will work with FEMA, the State VOAD, and the FEMA-funded construction analyst to facilitate rebuild projects for Vermont.



# Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs)

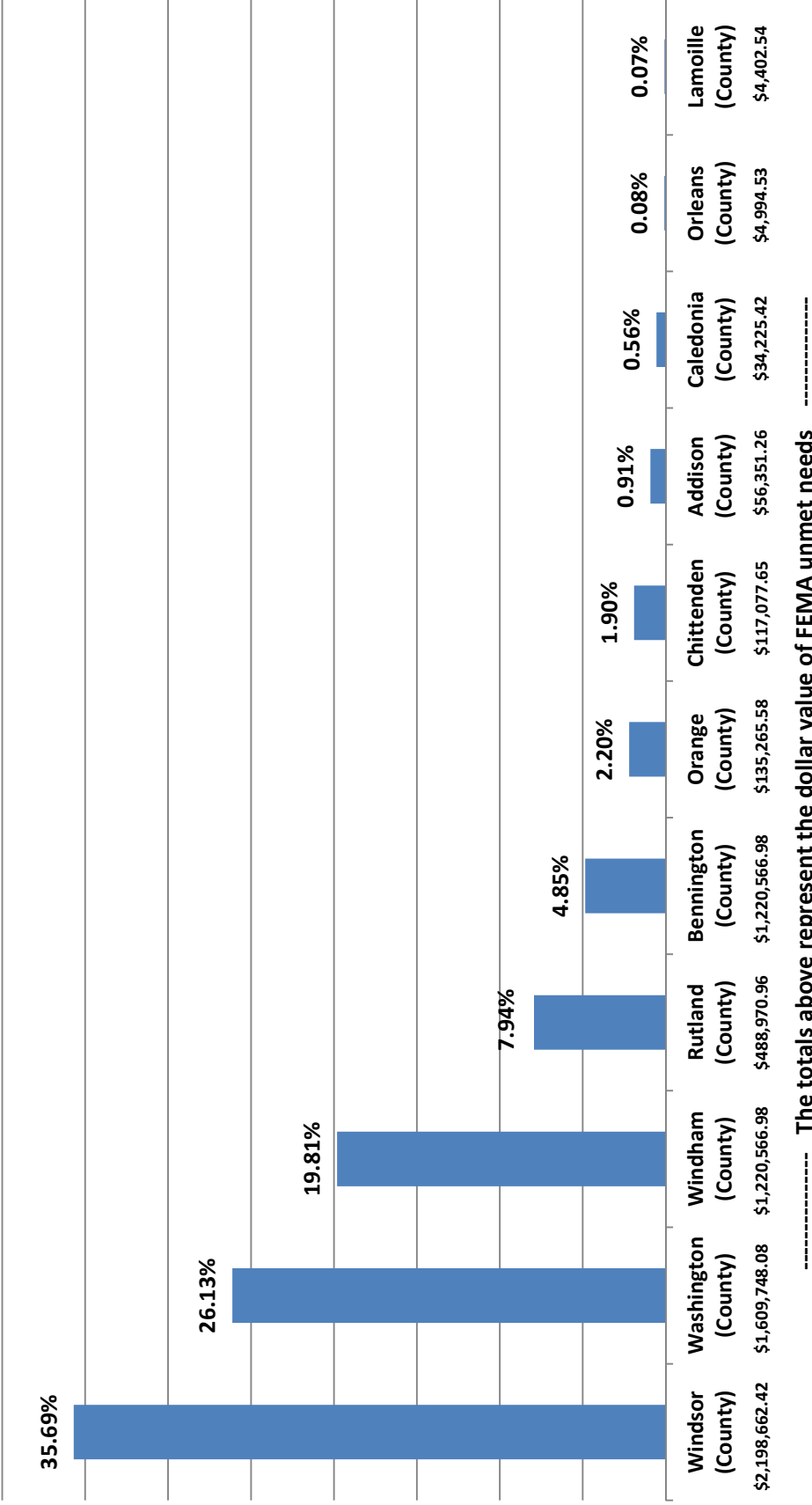
## DR-4022-VT

As of May 11, 2012



# Percentage of Disaster Recovery Unmet Needs Per County: Tropical Storm Irene DR-4022-VT

As of June 2, 2012



This graph reveals the percentage of FEMA applicants by county who have disaster recovery unmet needs\*. Although some of these applicants will recover on their own, many will require further assistance from the long term recovery committees (LTRCs).

Disbursing Federal Aid for Long Term Recovery:

- **CDBG Funding.** ACCD is developing an Action Plan for the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Funding. A public hearing process for the plan is underway with the final version to be submitted to federal authorities (HUD) for review by July 23<sup>rd</sup> and then implemented after approval later this summer. While trying to be comprehensive, it is already clear that unmet needs will outstrip funding available. The targeting requirement remains an additional challenge.
- **HMGP Round III.** As towns continue to assess the needs of their affected residents, the HMGP program continues to be of interest. In making funding allocations for the first two rounds of this program, the State committee has been challenged to assure funding remains for critical needs for which applications have not yet been filed. A third round of funding is anticipated this fall. The amount of available mitigation funds depends upon the total allocation of

public assistance program funds, which continues to grow.

Relocation and Mitigation for Mobile Home Parks:

Many mobile home parks damaged by Irene were located in floodplains. Assuring that these parks are relocated, or that effective mitigation measures are taken before mobile homes are replaced, will better protect these vulnerable homeowners. ACCD has secured some funding in the FY '13 Budget and is applying for additional funding through HMGP to give it the capacity to develop a strategic plan for identifying parks at risk of future flooding and plans for long term mitigation, or relocation.

Relocating Affordable Housing in Brattleboro:

The Brattleboro Housing Authority and the town will require ongoing assistance and significant resources to redevelop the 152 units of affordable housing in and near the flood way at Melrose Terrace and Hayes Court. The situation is all the more urgent given the need to relocate flood-prone lots at Tri-Park Mobile Home Park and the loss of housing due to the Brooks House fire in early 2011. BHA estimates the cost of the redevelopment at \$15 million and will need assistance securing the necessary resources.

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## Individual Recovery Goals

- *Ensure all Vermonters dislocated by Irene have a plan for securing safe permanent housing by December 2012. This includes that:*
  - *Damaged homes will be repaired to safe and decent standard*
  - *Destroyed homes will be replaced and/or relocated*
  - *Displaced tenants will be relocated*
- *Move housing out of flood-prone areas by:*
  - *Maximizing HMGP buyouts for homeowners*
  - *Working with mobile home park owners to mitigate, reconfigure or relocate damaged parks*
  - *Develop a strategic plan for improving the disaster resilience of mobile home parks*
- *VDRF fundraising to meet outstanding needs by August 28<sup>th</sup>*

## 2. ENSURING ECONOMIC RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

*“Our long-term recovery depends on the development of strong and robust local economies. Vermont will support businesses and farms with targeted assistance to aide recovery.” - Irene Recovery Report, January 2012*

The economic effects on Vermont from Irene are still being calculated and the full scope impact may never be known. In April FEMA issued an Economic Impact analysis examining the quantitative and qualitative data available to assess the economic consequences of TS Irene.<sup>2</sup> The results of this analysis make it clear that storm’s overall effect is significant as Vermont continues to recover:

- By late March, the Small Business Administration had made loans totaling more than \$33 million to businesses and individuals;
- The FEMA Individuals and Households Program (IHP) recorded Real Property Verified Losses as a result of Irene of almost \$25.5 million, representing just over 1000 homes and businesses;
- By mid-November, USDA had received reports of damage to 463 agricultural producers and it is estimated that 9,348 acres of land damage occurred as a result of TS Irene. Damage included, ranged from lost crops and infrastructure, land washed away by overflowing rivers and creeks, to wind damage to maple sugar woods.
- Vermont experienced a sharp spike in initial weekly unemployment claims immediately following Irene, with an increase in claims of 149% for the week ending September 3, and the culmination of initial claims from September 3 and September 10 representing a 376% increase.

The state and partners continue to assess and support recovery efforts for businesses, farmers and the state economy as a whole.

### Recovery Milestones

#### Small Business Assistance

##### Small Business Champions Team Established:

The Small Business Championship Team, an initiative of the Irene Recovery Report, came together to identify needs and develop a coordinated statewide approach to help businesses. The Team includes representatives from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA), Vermont’s Small Business Development Center (VT-SBDC), Vermont Business for Social Responsibility (VBSR), the Regional Development Corporations (RDC), the State Chamber of Commerce, and the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC). The Team is working to identify appropriate funding sources for addressing business needs and developing two state-wide applications for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) disaster funds.

##### Flood Recovery Tax Credit Enacted:

Initiated by the Administration, and working in cooperation with the Legislature and other partners, a \$500,000 increase in downtown tax credits for flood-affected properties was passed in the miscellaneous tax bill. These tax credits will provide eligible downtown and village center small business and rental property owners help in restoring flood-affected buildings.

##### Unmet Business Recovery Needs Surveyed:

The Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development surveyed businesses across the state to inform their ability to target support for the unmet needs still facing them

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<sup>2</sup> Vermont DR-4022. Economic Impact Assessment. April 2012. FEMA Economic Support Function. [http://www.vtstrong.vermont.gov/Portals/0/Documents/Vermont\\_Econ\\_Impact\\_Final%20-%2042312.pdf](http://www.vtstrong.vermont.gov/Portals/0/Documents/Vermont_Econ_Impact_Final%20-%2042312.pdf).

after TS Irene. Almost \$24 million in self-assessed financial need was identified by the 243 respondents that completed the survey by the June 4 closing date. Debt reduction was cited by more than half the respondents and was by far the single greatest need in total dollars, with a significant number of businesses ranking working capital, new customer acquisition, site repair, equipment replacement and structural repair as major needs.

#### Vermont Economic Development Authority

##### Loans:

In the immediate aftermath to TS Irene, many businesses benefited from funds available through the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA). This resource was consistently praised in meetings across the state. The VEDA program successfully administered: 294 loans averaging \$56,297 for a total of \$16,551,357 to businesses impacted by flooding in 2011. As a result of a request by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, VEDA has agreed to extend the Irene loan program to assist farmers with purchasing feed and potentially use the resource for spring planting needs.

##### Small Business Administration Loans:

Working with the Vermont Congressional Delegation, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development reached out to the Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide a tailored approach for Vermont. As of June 10, 2012, SBA had approved more than \$17.3 million in loans to 137 Vermont businesses.

#### Assistance to Farmers

##### Farm Relief Funds Distributed:

More than 200 farms have benefitted from grants from the Vermont Community Foundation to repair land, replace equipment, or provide feed to animals. Grants from the fund are awarded by a committee that includes representatives from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, the Vermont Community Foundation, the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), the Vermont Farm Bureau, Rutland Area Farm and Food Link, and the University of Vermont

Extension. The committee has received 237 applications and has made grants to 198 farmers totaling \$1,879,193, with an average grant size of just over \$7,900.

##### Agriculture Loans Extended:

VEDA/Agriculture Credit Corporation is working to extend the Tropical Storm Irene loan program to cover shortfalls in grant funding.

##### Survey of Remaining Farm Recovery Needs:

The Irene Recovery Office, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, USDA Farm Service Agency and the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts partnered to assess the effectiveness of recovery efforts so far and understand the remaining needs of Vermont farmers in order to fully recover from Tropical Storm Irene. The Castleton Polling Institute was contracted to conduct a phone and Internet survey in May of 375 farmers in Vermont that reported damages for which contact information is available. The four collaborating agencies will work with the case manager to be hired by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture (see below) to use the survey results to mobilize assistance to help meet remaining recovery needs. Among the findings:

- 193 of the respondents had received money, volunteer help or other forms of assistance;
- 50 farmers reported that all repairs of damage were now complete, with 213 reporting remaining damage to land, farm buildings, homes and other property;
- 46 farmers believe that their recovery will need additional economic assistance beyond what they have already received and/or applied for, while 40 could use additional labor, 41 need heavy equipment and 39 specified needs that might be met in a variety of ways.

##### Farm Case Managers Funded:

The Agency of Agriculture is working with partners to try to bring farmland back to full production in order to stabilize Vermont's farm economy in areas worst hit by Irene. Funding has been secured to hire 1-2 case managers housed in AAFM to assist farmers with unmet needs to develop recovery plans and access

available resources. The results of the survey (described above) will provide a starting point for this work.

#### USDA Farm Services Agency and NRCS

##### Funding:

\$4.7 million in federal grants is being distributed to Vermont farms to repair damaged fields. Along with washouts, farms need to remove silt, sand, and debris washed downstream during the storm, these grants will assist with that work.

##### Livestock Feed Mitigation:

Vermont was able to implement the FDA required mitigation plan to allow farmers to feed flooded feed to livestock.

### **Future Challenges & Activities**

#### Economic Development Funding Assistance:

Eligible entities are being encouraged to apply for US Economic Development Administration (USEDA) disaster grants. (USEDA Region 1 received \$53.7 million for a region including Vermont and thirteen other states and Porto Rico). These competitive grant funds are available to communities, non-profits, and other entities to develop and implement regionally based long-term economic development strategies in response to major federally declared disasters. The State is currently working to coordinate applications, facilitate meetings, and encourage eligible areas to apply for assistance. In cooperation with the Congressional Delegation, ACCD hosted an EDA grant training session. Through the work of the Small Business Champion Team, the State will be applying for two EDA grants to help businesses recover and identify and mitigate future risks.

#### Business Training:

To increase the resilience of Vermont's business community, there is a need to coordinate and support training to encourage businesses to mitigate future risk, diversify their markets as well as revisit, and in some cases develop, Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs). Among the public and private agencies providing this kind of training are the Small Business Development Centers, Vermont Emergency Management, the nonprofit Craft

Emergency Relief Fund, and the Regional Planning Commissions.

#### Soil and Feed Testing:

The Agency of Agriculture anticipates continued testing of feed and soils of flooded farms for safety. USDA will provide payments based on lost quantity and quality of feed to assist with the 2011 losses. Payments from this program will not be available until fall 2012.

#### Disaster Preparedness:

The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will train to address its need to build its own internal Incident Command Structure to be better able to respond to the immediate needs of farmers impacted by future disasters.

#### Tourism Marketing:

During the next phase of recovery the Department of Tourism is focused on delivering strong advertising creative in core drive markets that were most engaged post tropical storm Irene. As we approach the one-year mark and the all-important Vermont Foliage Season, the Department of Tourism is concerned that Vermont not lose market share to neighboring states who are bullish in their tourism marketing for fall foliage. It is critical to remind consumers that Vermont is the original and best fall foliage destination in the world with a strong market presence. Specific initiatives by the Department of Tourism include:

- Vermont Toolkit for tourism related organizations and events to acknowledge the first anniversary of Irene and to also contribute to the Vermont disaster relief fund.
- Buildup Vermont Photo Contest in which visitors and Vermonters will be encouraged to submit images of their favorite things to do, their entourage having fun in Vermont and all of the great things Vermont has to offer. The campaign will launch in June via social networks and a website accessible via mobile platforms for viewing and uploading photos.

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## Economic Recovery Goals

- *Continued financial support for livestock feed shortfalls through 2012, and a return to adequate and affordable feed supply for Vermont farmers by 2013*
- *All salvageable farmland restored for agricultural use by May 2013*
- *Hold the percentage of businesses that do not recover from Irene to below the HUD estimated 25-60% typical in major disasters*
- *Continue to outperform previous years consumption tax revenues and increase tourism in the coming year through strong, visual marketing and communications strategies to overcome any perceptions that Vermont is still damaged or inaccessible to travelers*
- *Target tourism marketing in flood-impacted communities as economic stimulus*

### 3. FOSTERING COMMUNITY RECOVERY

*“Vermont will champion local recovery by partnering with towns and cities in their ongoing efforts to rebuild infrastructure, restore services and assist residents and businesses.” - Irene Recovery Report, January 2012*

Municipalities continue to face significant fiscal challenges in responding to Irene’s impact to infrastructure in addition to the disruption of local economies from the flooding of local businesses. In the immediate response to Irene, the state assisted Irene impacted municipalities by advancing state aid payments, facilitating municipal bond opportunities and lines of credit for towns, and by delaying state education payments. The state continues to support local recovery by partnering with municipalities in their ongoing efforts to rebuild infrastructure, assisting with the FEMA Public Assistance process, and increasing the state share of non-federal payments for FEMA assistance. In addition, the state is continuing to support community planning and development initiatives in order to continue long term recovery efforts for severely impacted communities.

#### Recovery Milestones

##### Financial Assistance to Towns

###### Increased Federal Cost Share (90/10) for Irene:

In response to a request from Governor Shumlin, and with strong support and advocacy from Congressional Delegation partners, President Obama agreed, in May, to increase the federal cost share for the Public Assistance program for Irene to 90%. This is an increase above the normal 75% federal cost share and will result in significant savings for both municipal and state budgets.

###### Increased State Assistance for Local Match for Federal Financial Assistance:

- **FEMA.** The legislature supported the Governor’s initiative to provide funding relief for towns with extraordinary impact from Irene. This plan assures that no town will pay more for FEMA match than what

- \$.03 raises on that town’s equalized grand list. Payments for FEMA-eligible repair work above that amount will be paid by the state, not the town.
- **FHWA.** Within the Transportation bill, the legislature enacted the Governor’s initiative for the state to pay half of the non-federal match requirement for Federal Highway Administration assistance for road and bridge repairs on the town Federal Aid Highway System [note: these are roads funded through the Federal Highway Administration, and not FEMA].
- **HMGP.** The state is working, where needed, to fund the 25% non-federal share of homeowner buyouts funded through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. These will be funded with Vermont Housing Conservation Board funds and with the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief funds.

###### Tax Abatement:

The legislature authorized the Commissioner of Taxes to reimburse municipalities for property tax abatements granted in the wake of those natural disasters.

###### State Education Taxes Deferred:

The administration and the legislature supported the plan initiated by the State treasurer to defer education payments for Irene-impacted communities, saving the hardest hit municipalities from a mandatory late interest payment of 8%.

###### Assistance from State Treasurer:

The State Treasurer’s Office has provided one-on-one assistance to financially strapped towns and help to accelerate state payments to towns. The Office accelerated over \$155 million in highway and education funds to cash strapped towns and schools to help them meet their cash flow needs. The State Treasurer has also



worked with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, the Vermont Banker's Association, and the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank to provide a range of options for towns seeking assistance.

### **Community Development & Planning**

#### **Community Recovery Partnership:**

The Community Recovery Partnership (CRP), a cross-agency team facilitating collaboration in long-term planning and recovery efforts, held 13 regional meetings across the state. These meetings reached 45 of the hardest hit communities and were attended by over 500 people. These public community meetings allowed residents and municipal leaders to reflect on the Irene response and outline their long-range recovery vision and capacity on issues like housing, transportation, infrastructure, and economic development. This has enabled the state to try to target local needs with existing services in the short-term and also create a long-term state recovery plan that will help towns rebuild stronger and more prepared and resilient for future disasters.<sup>3</sup>

#### **FEMA Long Term Community Recovery Assistance:**

The towns of Wilmington and Waterbury qualified for FEMA's Long Term Community Recovery Function (ESF-14). Through this process, FEMA provided a framework and support to these communities to identify projects that would help their communities recover. FEMA drafted a report outlining the process and helped the two communities select recovery projects and provided possible funding resources. This assistance culminated in final reports for each town and a well-attended meeting for state and federal agencies as well as private foundations to help connect funding sources with project champions and their identified projects.

#### **Green Up to Recover:**

The Irene Recovery Office partnered with Green Up Vermont to incorporate Irene recovery activities into this year's Green Up Day on

Saturday, May 5, which kicked off the summer-long Green Up to Recover initiative. Green Up Town Coordinators in hard hit areas have worked with local Long Term Recovery Committees and town officials to identify projects including trash and debris hot spots from the flooding that still need to be cleaned up, as well as yard work and plantings for flooded properties and other needs that can be addressed by unskilled volunteers. The IRO will continue to support this work through the spring and summer.

### **Future Challenges & Activities**

#### **Technical Assistance To Towns:**

- **Flood Hazard Mitigation Planning.** State agencies and regional planning commissions will continue to support updating state and municipal hazard mitigation plans, floodplain maps, and identifying fluvial erosion hazard zones. State and RPCs will work to assist communities in the adoption of model flood bylaws in order to qualify for the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **State Program Review.** State agencies will audit their programs to determine the impact on flood response and recovery. For example, the Vermont Downtown Program will be reviewing their designation programs and will include flood issues as a result of Irene. The IRO will also be partnering with the Institute for Sustainable Communities to help develop a common assessment to review and evaluate programs and policies.

#### **Trainings and Capacity Building:**

- **Grant Writing Workshops.** Regional Planning Commissions are working with the Community Foundation to provide Grant Writing Workshops to towns with recovery-related projects;
- **Long Term Recovery Model Training.** FEMA will conduct training for Regional Planning Commission staff to learn the Long Term Community Recovery Model and provide support for additional towns.
- **Emergency Preparedness Training.** Vermont Emergency Management will continue to provide emergency preparedness trainings

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<sup>3</sup> Details from these meetings can be found at: [www.vtstrong.vermont.gov](http://www.vtstrong.vermont.gov) site.

for building our capacity to respond to, and recover from future extreme weather events.

EPA Technical Assistance Grant:

A multi agency team (ACCD leading, in partnership with ANR, AOT, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and the Mad River Valley Planning District), received a Technical Assistance grant from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promote flood hazard mitigation strategies. The grant will develop a set of policy options and strategies to improve flood resiliency at the local level, and will use this work to develop guidance for communities statewide. The grant will also

review state policies and identify opportunities for increased state integration and collaboration on programs to support community resilience.

Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) Capacity Building Project:

ISC, working with the Irene Recovery Office, ACCD and ANR has developed, and privately funded, a project to help build capacity, skills and tools for local, regional and state governments to implement actions for resilience. They will also help produce a road map of practical actions that can be implemented.

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## Community Recovery Goals

- *Implement state match funding support for towns to reduce Irene's impact to local property taxes*
- *Increase the number of towns with NFIP- compliant regulations*
- *Conduct trainings for towns and regional planning commissions to build recovery capacity and improve emergency preparedness*
- *Build local understanding of steps communities can take to enhance resilience*
- *Build state understanding of steps the state can take to enhance resilience, and recommend potential changes in policies, programs and funding sources.*

## 4. REBUILDING OUR ROADS, BRIDGES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

*“Vermont will continue its strong work at a state and local level to rebuild and repair roads, bridges, culverts and rails damaged by Irene without losing sight of the overall infrastructure needs.” - Irene Recovery Report, January 2012*

An unprecedented amount of work was completed to restore Vermont’s transportation infrastructure in the months immediately following Irene. On the state highway system, VTrans has continued to monitor its emergency repairs throughout winter and spring, while planning and designing permanent repairs as a part of its construction program. Some 200 towns across the state have been rebuilding their damaged roads, bridges and culverts, and developing project worksheets (PWs) for the FEMA Public Assistance process for federal reimbursements. These federal funds are all administered to towns through VTrans.

The state has also deployed special disaster-assistance consultants (Witt Associates and SAIC) to many towns to assist with the FEMA process. In addition, VTrans District Technicians have been working closely with towns as needed throughout this process. In order to build back stronger, the state has been working with FEMA (and challenging FEMA when necessary) to institute, wherever possible, hazard mitigation measures, to ensure a more resilient infrastructure to withstand future flooding.

### Recovery Milestones

#### FEMA Public Assistance:

As of May 31<sup>st</sup>, FEMA has obligated 2231 Project Worksheets (PWs) into their payment system. This represents approximately 77% of the estimated total number of PWs for Irene. VTrans continues to administer the FEMA Public Assistance program, providing technical assistance to towns, and overseeing contract administration and payments to towns. The FEMA Public Assistance Office is transitioning to the Vermont Emergency Management in order to make a more coherent liaison with

FEMA, and to better prepare the state for future disaster response and preparedness.

#### Public Assistance and Flood Hazard Mitigation:

To support the goal of “building back stronger” the state and FEMA are tracking upgrades to our infrastructure to increase their resilience for the next event. Of the project worksheets completed, 23% have included upgrades or improvements through 406 Hazard Mitigation funding. Examples include increases in culvert size, additions of riprap, and improved drainage ditching along rebuilt road segments. The goal is to include FEMA-funded repairs from Irene that will be more resilient and better able to withstand a similar event in the future.

#### National Guard Funding:

VTrans successfully reversed an initial ruling by the Federal Highway Administration so that work performed by National Guard units is now reimbursable under the FHWA Emergency Relief Program, providing \$4.4 million in additional federal funding.

#### Accelerated Bridge Construction Program:

The lessons learned from Irene are already producing tangible results in the way VTrans operates. The roll-out of the Accelerated Bridge Construction program was jump-started by some of the lessons learned through the initial Irene response - combining technical and process innovations to deliver projects faster and more economically.

#### Irene Innovations and Collaboration:

VTrans developed a task force to evaluate and implement the lessons and innovations from Irene that can improve VTrans processes and project delivery. Closer collaboration between VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources is becoming a regular part of doing business and the beginning of a resilient infrastructure standard.

### Transportation Bill:

The passage of the Transportation Bill provides VTrans with the administrative capacity to ensure that Irene-related projects can move expeditiously. In addition to funding both the FHWA and FEMA funds for full recovery, including enhanced state match, the bill includes mitigation projects as a priority within Transportation Enhancement projects. All of these elements help continue the mission of building back stronger. Specific measures in the legislation include:

- Increased funding in the Town Highway Structures program by \$500,000 to meet current and anticipated unmet needs of municipalities in rehabilitating and replacing town infrastructure due to Irene.
- Permanently reduced the local share from 20% to 10% for federal aid town highways that are damaged and covered under the Federal Highway Emergency Relief program. The State will be contributing 10% of the costs under this amended program to assist towns in the future when facing these unbudgeted costs. The Legislature appropriated \$400,000 in state funds for this new assistance to towns.
- Additional positions were added at the Agency of Transportation to provide municipalities with additional technical assistance for local projects.
- A new incentive program was created as a result of “Lessons Learned” from Irene. Towns will see their local match requirement cut in half for town highway bridges if they close the bridge without erecting a temporary bridge in order to reduce total project costs and save both state and town funds.

### Waterbury State Office Complex

#### Rebuilding Plan Decided:

In March the Governor and Legislative leaders announced that the State will pursue a modification of “Option B” from the Freeman French Freeman feasibility study to restore the “spine” of historic buildings at the Waterbury State Office Complex and add a remodeled

addition to accommodate the return of 900 employees from the Agency of Human Services. By removing buildings from the floodway to restore the floodplain function, and retaining the historic integrity of the core building while modernizing the workspace, the project is designed as a model for resilience. The legislature endorsed this concept in May within the Capital Bill which allocated an initial \$12 million for the project. Freeman French Freeman has been contracted to design and oversee the project, scheduled for completion in 2015.

#### State Hospital Relocation:

The State is pursuing a site in Berlin near the existing Central Vermont Medical Center to build a new 25-bed mental health hospital as a partial replacement of the 54-bed Vermont State Hospital in Waterbury after it was closed. This follows the Legislature’s passage of a bill to expand community care including three new regional acute-care mental health facilities: the 25-bed unit in Berlin, six beds at Rutland Regional Medical Center and 14 at the Brattleboro Retreat. The goal is to complete construction of the new 25-bed hospital by the end of calendar year 2013.

#### FEMA-State WSOC Operations Group:

A joint FEMA-State working group for the Waterbury State Office Complex (WSOC) has been formed to ensure timely progress on writing over 90 project worksheets for the complex and to address critical issues in the determination of FEMA reimbursement for expenses in the restoration of the Complex and the Vermont State Hospital. The state team includes the Irene Recovery Office, Agency of Administration, BGS, ANR, VEM and a special designee from the AG’s office.

### **Future Challenges & Activities**

#### Facilitating FEMA Public Assistance for Towns:

The partners involved in facilitating the FEMA PA program will continue to work with FEMA while their Joint Field Office remains in Vermont including supporting towns with unresolved FEMA issues. The state’s goal is to maximize eligibility and get the best possible project worksheets written and obligated for

towns. Many of the remaining projects are large, complicated projects, and the state works with FEMA on a case-by-case basis to maximize eligible 406 Hazard Mitigation opportunities. The state's goal is to support and enhance regional and local capacity for maximizing mitigation opportunities. VTrans will work with towns to ensure repairs to town infrastructure as well as repayment and audits, are all done to highest standards possible.

#### Ongoing Road Monitoring and (re)Repairs:

While VTrans made unprecedented repairs to the State's roadways in the Fall, the Agency will need to inspect (and stabilize as necessary) all repairs throughout the Spring and Summer and administer the FHWA Emergency Relief program for all roads and structures on the Federal Aid System. VTrans continues to monitor the entire system for ongoing potential emergency repairs. A "Scan Tour" is underway including a cross section of state and federal partners (VTrans, ANR, FHWA, ACOE) to closely inspect and evaluate the stability of existing repairs, and to determine how

permanent repairs will be made. Some of the permanent repairs will take a few construction seasons to complete due to size and complexity.

#### Long-Term Infrastructure Resilience:

VTrans is planning a collaborative long-term resilience strategy; developing goals and processes for infrastructure development and repair in concert with ANR river management goals including joint ANR/VTrans trainings on fluvial geomorphology (river science). The Agency will continue to support municipalities in their recovery and mitigation efforts and work with regional planning entities to develop better systems for damage reporting and mutual aid.

#### Permitting:

Expediting the permitting process greatly aided the ability of VTrans to make repairs in the Fall. The permitting process needs to be revisited and revised, with an integrative approach, to continue to streamline the state's ability to work more efficiently and effectively when repairing state infrastructure.

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## Infrastructure Recovery Goals

- *95% of FEMA worksheets for town infrastructure repair projects obligated by one year Anniversary*
- *Maximize federal participation in state's recovery*
- *Greater than 50% of structures repaired with more resilient features (406 mitigation and higher codes and standards);*
- *Successful challenges to FEMA's non-resilient determinations (culvert upsizing, bigger bridges)*
- *WSOC and VSH renovations completed by 2015 with maximized FEMA reimbursement*

## 5. MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

*“Vermont will continue to honor its strong environmental ethic through the ongoing response and recovery. Our efforts will apply flood plain management that protects our communities and our environment in partnership with local government, small businesses, farmers and property owners.” - Irene Recovery Report, January 2012*

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene, the state of Vermont balanced the need for a speedy recovery with its commitment to environmental conservation. Vermont will continue to honor its strong environmental ethic through the ongoing response and recovery. We learned that natural systems maintained and allowed to function provided the best protection to property owners and infrastructure. Our efforts will establish an approach to river and flood plain management that takes advantage of this fact and smartly balances environmental and landowner considerations in collaboration with local government, the private sector, the environmental community, and property owners.

### Recovery Milestones

#### Threats Assessed and Removed by Debris

##### Team:

ANR established an emergency response team for debris under an incident command structure. This team removed debris, mainly woody but also some gravel and silt, that posed an imminent threat to transportation infrastructure, buildings and other property. This team is currently on stand-by status and the day-to-day tasks of managing debris issues has returned to the DEC solid waste program for woody debris and other general debris not in a river channel, and to the river management program for gravel, silt and woody debris jams in river channels.

#### Stream Bank Stabilization by NRCS:

The US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service’s Emergency Watershed Protection program (EWP) is stabilizing stream banks and in a few cases removing woody debris and gravel from stream channels at 152 sites in 54 towns in Central and Southern Vermont at a total cost of \$7.3 million. As of early June, work had been completed at 35 of 51 sites identified as urgent, with 3 of 101

less urgent sites completed. NRCS expects the majority of the remaining work to be completed during the summer. The federal government will share 90% of the costs going forward, and is working out the mechanics for providing retroactive payments to local sponsors on projects already completed at 75% cost share.

#### Legislation to Prevent Future Flood Damage:

The Governor signed Senate Bill 202 into law on May 14, 2012. In enacting this law, the Vermont legislature responded to the Governor’s call for additional authority and resources to prevent or reduce future flood damage. This law will:

- Call state agencies to work together to help communities manage development in a manner that minimizes or avoids flood damage in the future;
- Bring state and local governments together to develop a common understanding and a training program regarding how we can effectively and efficiently do work in our rivers during an emergency that reduces future flood risks;
- Ensure that Vermont communities will all have the opportunity to take advantage of the protections offered by the national flood insurance program. The state will do this by filling the gaps in our current flood protection requirements and by providing technical assistance and support to our towns and cities; and
- Respond to the record-setting levels in Lake Champlain by looking at ways to ensure sufficient protections for lake and pond shorelines subject to erosion damage when the waters rise.

### Vermont Youth Conservation Corps:

VYCC crews will work a total of 40 crew-weeks on recovery related projects in various communities this summer. This will include work on the upper White and Tweed rivers with the White River Partnership, projects at several locations in National Forests, and along various damaged trails around the state in locations hit by Irene.

## **Future Challenges & Activities**

### Develop Strategies to Minimize Future Floods:

The State will work with communities to develop effective strategies that minimize the effect of future flooding on infrastructure and the environment. These include hazard mitigation planning, and adherence to the rules of the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that residents have access to flood insurance. Specific work that we will pursue include the following:

- Increase support for towns seeking technical reviews of floodplain development proposals. ANR will train Regional Planning Commission and municipal staff to complete the statutorily required review of developments proposed in mapped floodplains. By creating a greater network of professionals to assist towns with floodplain regulation, Vermont will substantially increase municipal participation, awareness, and protection of their floodplain assets.
- ANR will promote floodplain protections through an outreach program to include the provision of model floodplain protection bylaws and ordinances.

### Need for Continued Debris Monitoring:

Many of Vermont's rivers and streams changed significantly in the floods after Irene. Flood patterns that were once predictable now need to be reassessed and river corridors and floodplains restored. Rivers and streams have also been clogged with debris, creating new flood risks. ANR will continue to monitor debris issues and adjust our approach as necessary.

### Guidance on Environmental Related Health

#### Hazards:

Following each of the 2011 flood events, ANR worked with the Vermont Department of Health, EPA and local officials including fire, police and other emergency responders to address health hazards, including the risks of contact with contaminated water, waste and spill cleanup, repairing damaged water and sewer lines, and the risks of breathing contaminated dust. ANR and VDH are working together to capture the valuable guidance and outreach documents prepared in 2011 to ensure that this information is readily available for the next flood emergency.

#### Coordinated Response for Future Events:

ANR will continue to ensure a coordinated emergency response by state agencies collectively responsible for natural resource protection, agriculture, transportation, and economic and community development. In this way, as occurred in response to the floods of 2011, the state will achieve broader goals to ensure public safety, minimize disruptions and livelihood, and protect the environment. Specific work will include the following:

- ANR will adopt emergency river management rules to assist town officials in identifying imminent threats and the emergency measures that will reduce the risks and vulnerabilities of town citizens and their property in future floods.
- ANR and VTrans will establish and maintain a river management training program to help VTrans, municipalities, consulting engineers, Regional Planning Commissions, and ANR staff identify river instability and design river restoration and protection measures that will both protect river ecosystems and minimize river erosion hazards.
- State agencies will establish a Flood Resilient Communities Program through which the State would provide increasing financial incentives to those municipalities that have taken greater and greater steps to protect river corridors and floodplains and mitigate other flood and fluvial erosion hazards.

- ANR and VTrans will continue reaching out to private landowners who have concerns with past and future changes to the rivers and the effect the river may have on their property. The success of this outreach effort will turn on the ability of the state to gain access to private property to do necessary work in the rivers.

Minimize Health and Environmental Impacts:

The State must also work to minimize the public health and environmental impacts of past and future flooding. Hazardous materials, oil, sewage and rubbish were spread across the landscape as a result of the flooding demanding the expertise of ANR spill response teams and solid waste staff. ANR also responded to requests for assistance from communities that suffered broken or compromised water and sewer systems. Much of the waste, and nearly all of the water and sewer infrastructure damage was addressed in the weeks immediately following the Irene flooding, but there are remaining needs. Specific actions to be taken include the following:

- Providing training, guidance and priority funding for municipalities on the proper siting and construction of sewer and water lines and treatment systems;
- Ensuring that spills of oil and chemical wastes are minimized through training, outreach and implementation of improved practices for oil and chemical storage;
- Putting in place improved guidance documents and education materials for communities to assist them with emergency preparedness and public health protections.

Incident Command Structure:

ANR will supplement existing emergency response teams with incident command structure to coordinate work across a range of flood response issues including river management, spill response, wastewater and water system protection, and waste disposal. As for all effective ICS operations, developing an appropriate span of control is critical, and as a result ANR will determine in advance which consultant or external (e.g. EMAC) resources will be called into service during a flood emergency.

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## Environmental Recovery Goals

- - *Adopt rules covering any floodplain encroachments that are currently exempt from municipal regulation (agriculture, silviculture, transportation, utilities, schools, etc.). This action will bring Vermont into compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). States that are not in compliance risk suspension from the NFIP and loss of access to the federally subsidized insurance (which paid out 49 million to Vermont policy holders after Irene).*
  - *Continue to monitor high-risk debris accumulations and work with local governments and private landowners to address any accumulations that pose a threat to public health and safety or the environment.*
  - *Conduct stream geomorphic assessments and provide river corridor plans, maps, and model protection bylaws to municipalities especially for those sensitive (erosive) rivers where infrastructure may be threatened.*
  - *Apply statewide standards for culverts and bridges that are cost-effective, reduce the risk of flood damage and improve fish and other aquatic organism passage. VTrans and ANR will provide incentives, training and guidance in the application of these standards at the local level.*
  - *Restore fish and wildlife habitat in river corridors most badly damaged by the flooding or responses to flooding in the form of channel modification, berm removal, floodplain restoration, and riparian buffer plantings.*
  - *Seek funding from appropriate federal and state programs to assist in achieving these goals.*



## 6. PREPARING FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

*“To better prepare for future disasters, Vermont will apply lessons learned from Irene for planning, emergency response and recovery.” - Irene Recovery Report, January 2012*

Recovery does not just include reestablishing infrastructure and assisting citizens and businesses as they rebuild. We must also prepare to strengthen our defenses so we can be ready for the next storm. Vermont will apply the lessons learned from Irene for planning, emergency response, response support and recovery to prepare for all future disasters.

Ultimately the state of Vermont will strive to build upon an existing emergency preparedness, planning, response, and recovery infrastructure that functions as a cohesive unit among all level of governments. In addition to governmental multi-level, interagency cooperation, we will strive to more fully integrate private sector capabilities and improve individual family and household preparedness.

### Recovery Milestones

#### Trainings:

Vermont Emergency Management is expanding its outreach and training efforts at all levels of government. The basis for all emergency response is the Incident Command System (ICS). In addition to trainings for State Executive leadership, regional and local emergency responders, VEM is conducting train-the-trainer classes to increase statewide training capacity.

#### After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP):

The AAR/IP was conducted to capture information, observations and recommended actions from the pre-incident preparedness activities through response and response support actions to the early stages of recovery related to TS Irene. The report and associated improvement plan was compiled from “hot washes” and after action discussions at the team and local level through the state level.

Identified strengths are summarized as follows:

- Pre-Incident Planning
- Established Relationships through Training, Exercises and Real World Experience
- Regional Planning Commissions
- Community Volunteerism
- Emergency Responders and Personnel
- Local Emergency Operations Centers

Major areas for improvement included:

- Volunteer and Donations Management
- SEOC and Interagency Coordination
  - Road Closure Information
  - Joint Information Center
- Information Gathering Process
- Coordinated communications
- Continuity of Operations Planning
  - IT Redundancy
  - State EOC Location
- State EOP Annex Revisions

#### State and Local Plans:

With identified responsible partners, VEM is working to facilitate the update the State Emergency Operations Plan and the State Hazard Mitigation Plan, implementing projects & plans identified through HMGP and identifying and attempting to fund other hazard mitigation projects ineligible for HMGP. Additionally, supported by the Regional Planning Commissions and local emergency managers, VEM is coordinating the update of local emergency and hazard mitigation plans.

#### Communications System:

VEM will develop a Community Communications System that includes State Emergency Operations Center / Transportation Operations Center system integration, establishes redundant communications means through the SEOC, reinforces information flow processes during outreach and training and, maximizes awareness of all types of media to share information.

### Goods and Volunteer Management:

The state is also developing a volunteer and goods management strategy for times of declared emergency and disaster. This includes state level donations coordination team training that has taken place and working to improve volunteer management capabilities with the Irene Recovery Office and SerVermont.

## **Future Challenges & Activities**

### Local Emergency Operations Plan:

Cities and towns are encouraged to update or develop a local Emergency Operations Plan.

### Interagency Collaboration:

The State needs to ensure that all state agencies that have identified roles and responsibilities in the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) and State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) fully participate in emergency preparedness activities that include plan development, training and

exercises. This will strengthen the integration of those agencies into the multi-level networks and plans necessary to support more effective response, response support and recovery.

### Expand & Institutionalize Role & Partnership of RPCs:

Building on existing state agency partnerships with the RPCs it is important to assess and understand the current capacities of those organizations to fulfill the desired obligations that are envisioned for them to undertake.

### Maintaining Efforts:

It will be challenging in the days ahead to sustain the continuum of response, recovery and preparedness across that state and through all levels of governance. We must be vigilant to ensure the implementation of lessons learned to mitigate future risks and hazards and prepare for a better-coordinated response.

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## **Preparedness Recovery Goals**

- *Identify key agency actions and timelines for completion based on the After Action Report/Improvement Plan. Periodically (every six months) measure and report progress on those actions.*
- *Institutionalize inter-agency collaboration for response, response support and recovery through the revised SEOP and SHMP. Specific focus areas include:*
  - *Debris Management*
  - *Financial Management*
  - *Volunteer & Donations Management*
  - *Documenting and including more detailed procedures associated with the other aspects of the SEOP Recovery annex*

Estimated Funding resources in response to Tropical Storm Irene

(\$ in Millions)

June 14, 2012

LEGEND: Red = Federal Blue = state; Purple = local; Green = Private/Non-Federal Match; Brown = Insurance	1. Support for Individuals	2. Ensure Economic Recovery	3. Foster Community Recovery	4. Rebuild Roads, Bridges, Rail and Infrastructure	5. Manage Environmental Impact	6. Prepare for Future Disasters	Sub-Total
Federal	\$ 109.70	\$ 17.30	\$ 27.60	\$ 335.70	\$ 18.85	\$ 23.45	\$ 532.60
State	\$ 1.88	\$ 8.20	\$ 2.20	\$ 92.90	\$ -	\$ 5.20	\$ 110.38
Local		\$ -	\$ 0.90	\$ 4.30	\$ 5.60	\$ 2.60	\$ 13.40
Privates	\$ 5.80	\$ 17.50	\$ -				\$ 23.30
Insurance		\$ 0.40		\$ 53.30	\$ -		\$ 53.70
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$ 117.38</b>	<b>\$ 43.40</b>	<b>\$ 30.70</b>	<b>\$ 486.20</b>	<b>\$ 24.45</b>	<b>\$ 31.25</b>	<b>\$ 733.38</b>
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE (projection)</b>							
<b>Federal Highway Administration</b>							
Federal				146.3			
State				16.6			
Local				0.6			
<b>Emergency Management Assistance Compact</b>							
- Food, medical supplies, assistance	2.5						
	0.3						
- National Guard Work (IL, WV, ME, VA, NH, SC, OH)				4.4			
				0.1			
- Other State Dept of Transportation (ME & NH)				4.3			
				0.1			
<b>Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)</b>							
- Public Assistance (includes 406 mitigation)							
Federal			26.0	108.0			
State			1.7	6.9			
Local			0.9	3.7			
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program- (15% of Public Assistance) <sub>(1)</sub>					7.9	7.9	
Local					2.6	2.6	
- Individual Assistance (IA)	22.7						
	0.4						
<b>Waterbury Complex replacement<sub>(1)</sub></b>				32.3		15.6	
				64.7		5.2	
				53.3			
<b>Vermont State Hospital</b>				40.4			
				4.5			
<b>Natural Resource Conservation Service</b>							
- Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) - homes					6.3		
- EWP - homes					1.4		
- Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) - farms					4.7		
- ECP - farms					1.6		
<b>State impacts - non-federal eligible</b>			6.4				
- Roxbury Fish Hatchery, Buildings outside of Waterbury, Petroleum Clean-Up, CCTA.			0.4				
<b>FEDERAL GRANTS and LOANS</b>							
<b>Community Development Block Grant</b>	21.7						
<b>Human Services Disaster - Case Management Grant</b>	2.4						
<b>Mental Health - Starting Over Stronger</b>	0.8						
<b>Department of Labor</b>				1.6			
<b>Private Flood Insurance (NFIP)</b>	42.0						
<b>Small Business Administration Loans (homes and businesses)</b>	17.6	17.3					
<b>Vermont Economic Development Authority Loans</b>		15.0					
		1.8					
<b>PRIVATE DONATIONS (to date)</b>							
<b>Vermont Disaster Relief Fund</b>	3.8						
<b>Vermont Community Foundation - Farm Disaster Relief</b>		2.5					
<b>Other Private Donations</b>	2.0						
<b>STATE ASSISTANCE</b>							
<b>Education Fund tax abatement</b>			0.5				
<b>Housing and Mobile Home Legislation</b>	1.2						
* Results may not add due to rounding	Total: \$ 117.38	\$ 43.40	\$ 30.70	\$ 486.20	\$ 24.45	\$ 31.25	\$ 733.38

√ Indicates Estimates to date

(1) Hazard mitigation prepares for future disasters (Goals b) and protects the environment (Goal 5). We assume that all hazard mitigation projects will equally meet both Long Term Recovery Goals.