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PUBLIC WORKS' STATEMENT ON JULY 10TH WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT DISCHARGE

Burlington, VT – During an intense thunderstorm shortly before midnight on July 10th Burlington's Main Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) experienced a failure of the computerized control system for our wet weather (combined sewer) disinfection pumps leading to the release of approximately 3 million gallons of treated (received screening and enhanced settling), non-disinfected wet weather discharge (stormwater and wastewater).

This discharge was mixed with fully treated and fully disinfected discharge from the remainder of the plant. This mixing and the outfall location (½ mile into the Lake passing through a diffuser, releasing discharges in a dispersed manner) may limit any increased bacteria loads in the water.

We have posted caution signs at beaches within one mile of our Plant's outfall location, which includes Blanchard Beach, Blodgett Access Area, the Coast Guard Boat Launch and Perkins Pier. We have sampled twice today, and will have results available early tomorrow. Based on prior similar events bacteria levels did not rise significantly at the beaches, however, caution is warranted for vulnerable populations (infants and toddlers who might ingest water and individuals with compromised immune systems) before recreating in these waters.

We will be following up with sample results as they become available tomorrow.

“We fully acknowledge, and apologize for, the multiple discharges this season,” said Public Works Director Chapin Spencer. “Our team focuses on protecting the City’s water resources every day and so the equipment and plant process failures that have led to these unpermitted discharges have been extremely frustrating for us as well as the community at large. It is our responsibility to protect our community against these events – and we will do everything within our power to deliver.”

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT BACKGROUND INFO AND NEXT STEPS

The WWTP was extensively upgraded in the mid 1990’s and has been highly successful at decreasing Burlington’s impact on the Lake. These upgrades have allowed us to fully treat and fully disinfect an average of 170M gallons of wet weather discharge annually. Prior to these upgrades, this would all have went into Burlington’s waterways.

In 2009, Burlington created the state’s 2nd stormwater utility, and through the dedicated efforts of that program, has maintained a consistent upward trajectory on the goal of further reducing untreated combined sewer overflows and the impact of wet weather on the Main WWTP. For more information, see: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/Water-Quality-History>.

Further upgrades to the system are needed and we have been planning and analyzing these investments. In May and June presentations to the City Council the department highlighted an estimated \$8-10 million dollars of capital upgrades to replace existing treatment systems and pump station components anticipated over the next 4-5 years. Given the two equipment failures this season, this reinvestment takes on new urgency and we will continue to engage the City Council, the DPW Commission and the public on these important investments. We are fully committed to making all capital upgrades necessary to protect the lake with as little an impact on ratepayers as possible. DPW will be working with the Mayor’s office to finalize a plan for this

reinvestment by December 1, with the intention of a bond vote on Town Meeting Day March 2019.

In the short-term, we will be hiring an independent third party to fully evaluate the main plant's disinfection system and prioritize high-risk liabilities and will be immediately implementing any feasible near term improvements. We will update the DPW Commission on these efforts at their upcoming July 18, 2018 meeting which will be hosted at our Main Wastewater Treatment Plant. Later this summer, we will also announce and host a public Town Hall meeting to discuss Burlington's clean water efforts and answer questions from the public.

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Please note that this communication and any response to it will be maintained as a public record and may be subject to disclosure under the Vermont Public Records Act.