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Sent: Friday, March 19, 2021 7:37:35 PM
To: Ann Cummings <ACUMMINGS@leg.state.vt.us>
Cc: Tierney, June <June.Tierney@vermont.gov>; kendal.smith@vermont.gov
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Subject: FW: clarification from this afternoon

Dear Chair Cummings:

I hope you are well. I am writing to follow up on comments made this afternoon in your committee with respect to the duties and obligations of the Public Advocacy Division of the Department. First, to confirm, I am currently, and for the past four years have served as the Director of the Public Advocacy Division. This position is often referred to as the Public Advocate.

Second, regarding the annual Public Advocacy Reports which were mentioned, I have attached Act 130 of 2016 which contained the obligation for the Department to prepare and submit the annual advocacy reports. The relevant section of the attached Act is found at p. 35-37. The first report was due in December of 2016, and that obligation ended three years after the enactment date of May 25, 2016 which was May 26, 2019. Pasted here <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/annual-report-public-advocacy> is a link to the Department website page where the reports are posted. We generally received positive feedback from some in the Senate from these reports, that said, after 2019, as the obligation had expired, we allocated scarce resources elsewhere and ceased the reporting.

I hope this is helpful in clearing up any misperceptions regarding that particular matter discussed this afternoon. In addition, the Department will be sending a separate response to allegations raised by the member of the public who testified today.

As always, I am happy to speak with your committee at your convenience about our role and the advocacy of our division within the Department and on behalf of the public.

Thank you and I hope you have a nice weekend.

Jim

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