



T.I.

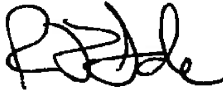
State of Vermont  
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
120 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05603-0001  
[www.dmv.vermont.gov](http://www.dmv.vermont.gov)

[phone] 802.828.2000  
[fax] 802.828.2098  
[ttd] 800-253-0191

Agency of Transportation

**DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM****DATE:** November 2012

**TO:** Senator Ann Cummings, Chair, and Members of Joint Fiscal Committee

**FROM:** Robert D. Ide, Commissioner 

**SUBJECT:** I Am Vermont Strong Plate Report

*The department shall report its accounting of fund receipts and disbursements, plate inventory, and uncollected payments for plates distributed to the joint fiscal committee at its November 2012 meeting.*

As required by bill S.249, attached is the "I Am Vermont Strong" Plate Report.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me.



## **BACKGROUND**

Tropical Storm Irene's visit to Vermont brought loss and damage unlike anything we have experienced in recent memory. The raging waters claimed six lives and left behind mind-boggling destruction to homes, highways, property, and land. The public support and outreach immediately following the storm was tremendous but by the fall of 2011, the need for continued assistance was still enormous and that need is ongoing today.

The Vermont Disaster Relief Fund was created following the 2011 spring flooding. When Irene struck Vermont in August, Gov. Shumlin formalized and established a governing body for the fund, which is the primary mechanism for providing disaster assistance to individuals.

The idea for the VTStrong plates was a spinoff from the "I Am Vermont Strong" movement that was started by Lyz Tomsuden and Eric Mallette of Rutland, VT. Originally "I am Vermont Strong" started as a Facebook photo that went viral. Vermonters, and even people from out of state, loved the message so much that they started requesting t-shirts by the hundreds. As Governor Shumlin said following the bill signing, "The 'I Am Vermont Strong' plate is a symbol of our commitment -- financial and personal -- to help every family find permanent housing and every Vermonter get back to work." Money raised by the sales is distributed to the Vermont Disaster Relief Fund (VDRF) and the Vermont Foodbank according to a formula established in the enabling legislation to help people impacted by Tropical Storm Irene.

The Department of Motor Vehicles and its many partners continue to be very successful promoting and selling the 'I Am Vermont Strong' plates. As of October 31, 2012, we have received payment for 33,111 plates.

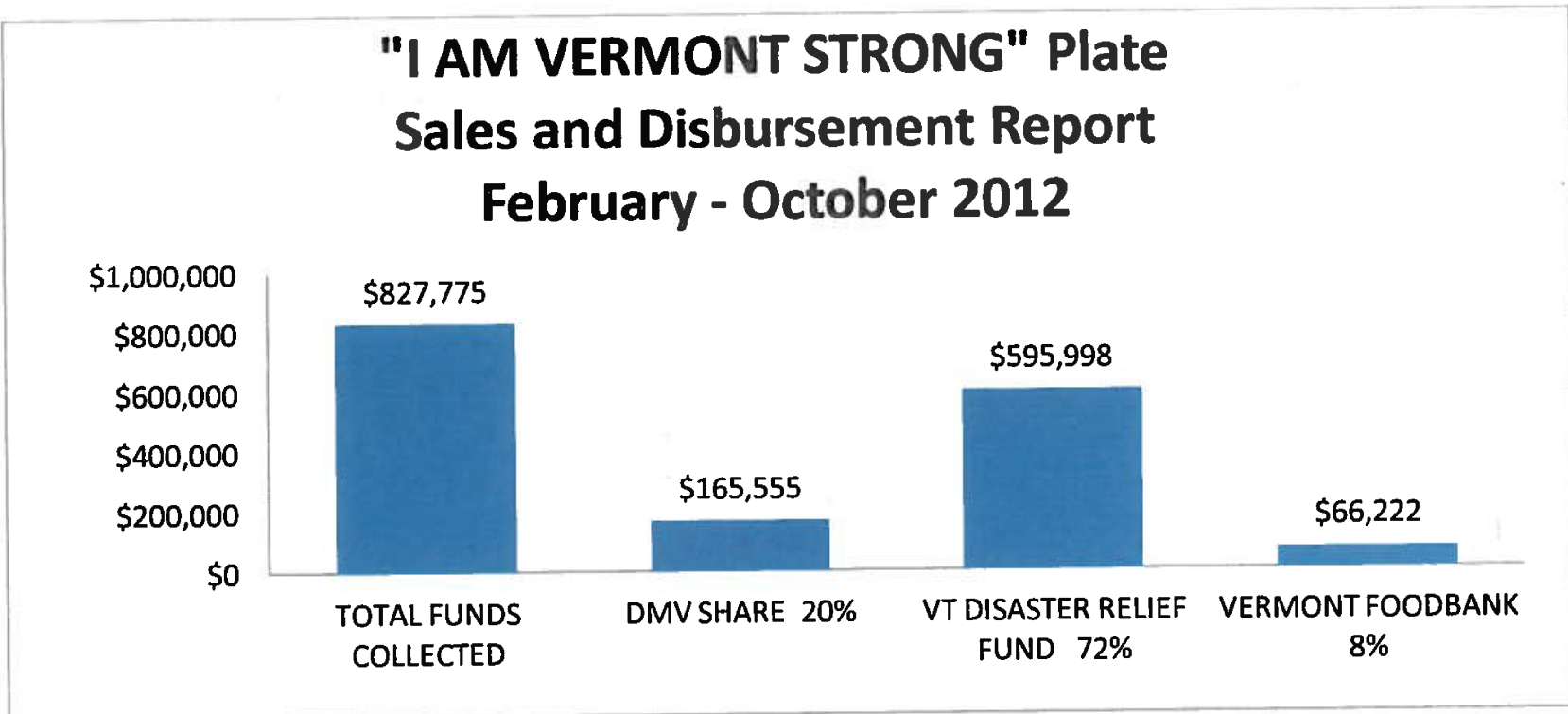
## **FUND DISBURSEMENT**

During the period of March through October 2012, the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles has distributed:

- \$595,998 to the Vermont Disaster Relief Fund
- \$66,222 to the Vermont Foodbank.

These contributions have enabled these entities to help Vermonters in the following manner:

- VT Disaster Relief Fund reports:
  - The VTStrong plate is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest donor to the VDRF following Tony Pomerleau and the Vermont Public Radio special telethon.
  - The average grant is \$12,000 and the VTStrong contributions have been used to assist approximately 49 Vermont families.
- John Sayles, the Executive Officer of the Vermont Foodbank, reports the Foodbank has been able to provide “397,332 meals to help our neighbors in need.”



Funds are disbursed to VT Disaster Relief Fund and Vermont Foodbank once a month before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

