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Press Release

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Contact:

Communications Office
(603)271-2121

Governor Hassan, State Officials Applaud U.S. Supreme Court's Decision to Uphold Verdict in MtBE Decision

\$236 Million Verdict in Favor of the State to Support Trust Fund Created by Bipartisan Legislation to Ensure Access to Clean Drinking Water

CONCORD - Following more than a decade of efforts by the State of New Hampshire in the case of the State v. Exxon, et al., Governor Maggie Hassan, Attorney General Joseph Foster and Department of Environmental Services Commissioner (NHDES) Tom Burack applauded the final decision by the United States Supreme Court to uphold a \$236 million verdict in favor of the State.

"Access to clean drinking water is fundamental to public health and public safety, critical to a thriving economy and our high quality of life," Governor Hassan said. "The final decision by the United States Supreme Court to uphold this \$236 million verdict in favor of the State marks the culmination of more than a decade of efforts by countless people across the state, whose hard work exemplifies New Hampshire's vigilance in fighting against pollution that damages our environment and threatens the health of our people."

As required by statute, after attorneys' fees and costs, 10 percent of the \$236 million dollar verdict plus interest will go into the State's Rainy Day Fund. The remainder will be deposited into the New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund, which was created by Senate Bill 380, bipartisan legislation that Governor Hassan signed into law in March of this year.

"Earlier this year, we worked together across party lines to ensure that these funds are used for their intended purpose – removing MtBE contamination – and passed bipartisan legislation to create the New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund to support ongoing cleanup efforts," Governor Hassan said. "Thanks to that important work, we will be able to use these funds to ensure access to safe and clean drinking water now and into the future."

"This decision upholds what we previously described as the most significant environmental victory in the history of the State," said Attorney General Foster. "The Department of Justice appreciates the legislatures' and Governors' support over the many years it took to bring the case to this successful resolution. The funds recovered will help ensure access to safe and dependable drinking water to thousands of New Hampshire residents."

"This legacy fund will provide the resources and mechanisms necessary to implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure that MTBE contamination is identified and remediated, and that existing public and private water supplies are protected against future contamination," NHDES Commissioner Burack said. "The fund will play a major role in providing safe, clean drinking water for all of our citizens for many years to come."

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