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### VTrans to Try New Merging Pattern on I-89 at French Hill Starting Monday Afternoon

MONTPELIER, Vt. -- July 26, 2013 – In recognition of increasing traffic volumes and a recent spate of backups in construction zones along I-89, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) will be deploying a new type of traffic control pattern in the southbound lanes on French Hill in Richmond starting next week. The “zipper taper” method of merging traffic has been utilized successfully in other states and VTrans officials hope to reduce delays during peak hours with this new traffic pattern.

“The French Hill closure is in a high-volume area and we are going to have to live with it for a while,” said VTrans District Project Manager, Dick Hosking. “The zipper method has proven itself in other situations and we thought it was worth trying here. This is going to require a change in the way motorists think about merging and a higher level of cooperation between members of the travelling public, but if we can work together, we should see the same kind of traffic flow improvements that other states have experienced.”

VTrans will install new message boards that encourage motorists to use both lanes of the highway until the merge point at the edge of the work zone. By using both lanes of I-89 up to the point of merging, more traffic will be allowed to move into and through the work zone. This “Take Turns” or zipper method is intended to be used only when traffic becomes congested in a single lane. During times when traffic volumes are lower, signs will encourage motorists to merge in a more traditional manner as they approach the work zone.

Regardless of the traffic pattern, motorists are asked to be courteous, reduce speeds, pay attention and drive safely in work zones. Extra law enforcement will be on hand throughout the work zone to increase safety for the traveling public and workers on the site.

For additional information on how the zipper merge works, please see the following website:  
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/zippermerge/>