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January 30, 2008

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

PROJECT NAME: Atlas Box & Crating Site Development
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Sutton
PROJECT WATERSHED: Blackstone
EOEA NUMBER: 14117
PROJECT PROPONENT: Atlas Box, LLC
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: December 24, 2008

As Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, I hereby determine that the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) submitted on the above project **adequately and properly complies** with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L., c. 30, ss. 61-62I) and with its implementing regulations (301 CMR 11.00).

Project Description

As described in the FEIR, the project involves the construction of an office, manufacturing and warehouse facility on an approximately 31.88 acre site on the easterly side of Route 146 in Sutton, MA. The Proponent, Atlas Box & Crating Company is a global packaging company that provides protective packaging to the automotive, medical and electronics industries.

The project will be constructed in two phases. The first phase of the building will be approximately 226,400 square feet (sf); Phase 2 will consist of approximately 209,000 sf of additional building space. The subject property is currently unimproved; however, recent activities on the site included an earth removal operation. Access to the project will be from the Worcester-Providence Turnpike (Route 146). The project is anticipated to generate

approximately 1,408 new vehicle trips per day and require the construction of 329 parking spaces.

The project site has several jurisdictional wetland resource areas, including the 200-foot Riverfront Area to Cold Spring Brook, which is located to the west of the property. The project will result in Buffer Zone impacts only. The project site also lies within a Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Zone II of a public water supply. The project site was recently the subject of a land-taking by the Wilkinsville Water District in order to comply with the 400-foot Zone I radius for the new public water supply. In exchange for the property taking, the Proponent has been assured a connection to the water distribution system from the new well. The expected water demand for the new facility is 7,670 gallons per day (gpd). Wastewater from the project will be treated in a private on-site soil absorption system. The total sewage design flow for the project is 8,000 gpd.

Jurisdiction

The project is undergoing environmental review and requires the preparation of a Mandatory Environmental Impact Report pursuant to Section 11.03(1)(a)(2) of the MEPA regulations because it requires state permits and because the project will result in the creation of more than 10 acres of new impervious surface. The project also meets ENF review thresholds for transportation at 301 CMR 11.03(6)(b)(14) because it will generate more than 1,000 new average daily trips on roadways providing access to a single location and result in the construction of more than 150 new parking spaces.

The project requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); a Highway Access Permit from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD); an Order of Conditions (OOC) from the Sutton Conservation Commission (and therefore a Superceding Order of Conditions from the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) if the local Order is appealed); Site Plan Approval from the Sutton Planning Board; and a Special Permit from the Sutton Zoning Board of Appeals.

Because the proponent is not seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the project, MEPA jurisdiction is limited to those aspects of the project that may cause Damage to the Environment as defined in the MEPA regulations, and that are within the subject matter of required or potentially required state permits. In this case, jurisdiction extends to transportation, wetlands and stormwater.

Review of the FEIR

The FEIR provided a detailed project description. It included existing and proposed site plans. It contained a description of each state permit or agency action required or potentially required, and demonstrated that the project will meet applicable performance standards. The FEIR provided an update on the local permitting process for the project. It responded to comments from MassDEP and MHD.

Stormwater

The project will result in the creation of 26.57 acres of new impervious surface, including 16.8 acres of roadways and new pavement, and 9.77 acres of rooftop. According to the FEIR, the stormwater management system for the project will consist of best management practices (BMPs) including deep-sump and hooded catch basins to collect and initially treat stormwater runoff and a conventional stormwater pipe network to convey the collected stormwater runoff. Runoff will then be routed through water quality swales and/or water quality units for secondary treatment and removal of total suspended solids (TSS). Stormwater will then be directed to infiltration systems to provide groundwater recharge.

As noted above, the project site is located within a Zone II for a Wilkinsville Water District public drinking water well. The location of the proposed project in a Zone II requires that extraordinary care be taken to avoid introducing contaminants to groundwater. The Proponent has committed to a proposed stormwater system that meets MassDEP's stormwater guidelines, and the FEIR addressed the additional precautions that will be taken to avoid the release of pollutants into surface stormwater discharged from the site.

The FEIR included an analysis of opportunities for: recharge of runoff from impervious areas both from rooftops and other areas; improved source control of runoff throughout the site; and enhanced control of pollutants of concern (including sediments, nutrients, metals and petroleum-based pollutants). I encourage the Proponent to consider using porous pavement in lower use parking areas, as well as creating rain gardens in parking lot islands and at lot edges for stormwater management and infiltration. The FEIR described an operations and maintenance program for the drainage system including a schedule for maintenance and identification of responsible parties.

I continue to encourage the proponent to consider Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in site design and storm water management plans. LID techniques can reduce impacts to land and water resources by conserving natural systems and hydrologic functions. The primary tools of LID are landscaping features and naturally vegetated areas, which encourage detention, infiltration and filtration of stormwater on-site. Other tools include water conservation and use of pervious surfaces. For more information on LID, visit <http://www.mass.gov/envir/lid/>. Other LID resources include the national LID manual (Low Impact Development Design Strategies: An Integrated Design Approach), which can be found on the EPA website at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid/>.

Wetlands

Approximately 5.5 acres of the 31.88 acre project site are occupied by bordering vegetated wetlands and intermittent streams. No impacts to wetland resource areas are anticipated as part of the project; however there will be some alterations in the 100-foot buffer zone.

The FEIR contained an update on the local wetlands permitting process for the project. This project filed a Notice of Intent under the Wetlands Protection Act on August 19, 2008 and

therefore is subject to the new wetlands Stormwater regulations (January 2, 2008). As stated in the FEIR the project has no direct impact on Wetland Resources and is subject to jurisdiction under the Wetlands Protection Act due to a small disturbance (.06 acres) in the buffer zone. There are no new impervious areas proposed within the buffer zone. According to the FEIR, the project is designed to infiltrate treated Stormwater for up to the 100 year storm event.

Traffic

Access to the site will be from Route 146 northbound. The FEIR included a Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS) to analyze the impact of the project on the state highway infrastructure and to evaluate the proposed access design. The TIAS was prepared in conformance with EEA/EOT guidelines and has provided an adequate analysis of project-related traffic. The analysis examined the Route 146 intersection with Boston Road and the Route 146 ramp intersections with Central Turnpike. The analysis of existing conditions indicates that the unsignalized intersections of the Route 146 off-ramps with Central Turnpike operate at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS). The signalized intersection of Route 146 with Boston Road is a high volume intersection that currently functions at LOS F during the morning and evening peak.

In response to comments from EOT, the FEIR provided a more in-depth analysis of the northbound and southbound left-turn ramps to address anticipated traffic deficiencies. The study area intersections for the FEIR analysis included Route 146 at Boston Road and Route 146 at Central Turnpike.

The analysis took into account anticipated background growth for the next 5 years and a number of site specific development projects that are ongoing or anticipated within the timeframe of this study. Forecasts of the project were based on guidelines published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). At full development of the assumed development plan, the project is anticipated to generate 1,408 external vehicle trips on a typical weekday. The trips include 704 entering and 704 exiting trips over the 24 hour period. The weekday morning peak hour is expected to generate 277 external trips with 213 inbound and 64 outbound trips. The weekday evening peak hour is expected to generate 275 external trips with 99 inbound and 176 outbound.

The Proponent has committed at Route 146 and the Site Drive to implement improvements consisting of roadway widening to provide acceleration and deceleration lanes for safe access and egress. MHD has stated that the design of the acceleration/deceleration lanes will need to conform to MHD standards and take into consideration right-of Way alterations that may be required as part of the Route 146 long range plan in this area.

Route 146 at Site Drive

In the section of Route 146 where the project is located, the highway has a median. Consequently, the site drive must be designed as a right in-right out driveway. The analysis of the project at Full Build has indicated that the driveway exit will operate at a LOS 'C' during both the morning and afternoon peak hours.

Route 146 at Central Turnpike on/off ramps

The analysis showed that the Route 146 interchange off-ramps with Central Turnpike are estimated to operate at an acceptable LOS 'B' during the morning peak hour. Under Build conditions, the analysis showed that LOS 'C' would be experienced. During the PM peak hour, the Northbound off-ramp was estimated to operate at LOS 'D' and a LOS 'F' was calculated for the Southbound off-ramps.

Route 146 at Boston Road

Boston Road is a two-way roadway that intersects Route 146 from east and west to form a four-approach signalized intersection. Each approach has multiple lanes that include exclusive turn lanes. At its intersection with Route 146, commercial land uses exist. There are two unrelated development projects occurring in the vicinity of this intersection. These include the Sutton Plaza Expansion (EEA#13854) and the Cold Spring Brook (EEA #13249) development. Those two projects will share responsibilities in constructing improvements at this intersection.

The intersection of Route 146 was analyzed with Boston Road assuming the existing configuration. Currently, this intersection experiences delay, and it will continue to operate at the same level of service under Build condition as under the No-Build condition during study peak periods with increased delays for some approaches anticipated which MHD stated as acceptable during the review of the Draft EIR. An analysis was also completed for Build conditions with planned improvements made at the Route 146/Boston Road intersection. This showed that anticipated conditions will be significantly improved over the unimproved conditions.

Construction Period Impacts

The FEIR included a discussion of construction phasing, evaluation of potential impacts associated with construction activities, and proposed feasible measures to avoid or eliminate these impacts. I advise the Proponent that the project must comply with MassDEP's Solid Waste and Air Quality Control regulations during construction.

I encourage the Proponent to work with MassDEP to implement construction-period diesel emission mitigation through MassDEP's Clean Construction Equipment Initiative / MassDEP Diesel Retrofit Program which consists of an engine retrofit program and/or use of low sulfur fuel to reduce exposure to diesel exhaust fumes and increase the removal of particulate matter (PM) by approximately 25 percent beyond that which can be removed by retrofitting diesel-powered equipment. All construction-related refueling and equipment maintenance activities should be conducted under cover on impervious surface areas with containment, and outside of any wetlands resource areas, endangered species habitat areas, residential areas and wellhead protection areas.

Sustainable Design

I continue to encourage the Proponent to incorporate sustainable design elements into the project design. A sustainable design program may include, but is not limited to, the following measures:

- Optimization of natural day-lighting, passive solar gain, and natural cooling;
- Use of energy efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and lighting systems, appliances and other equipment, and use of solar preheating of makeup air;
- Use of building supplies and materials that are non-toxic, made from recycled materials, and made with low-embodied energy;
- Provision of easily accessible and user-friendly recycling system infrastructure into building design;
- Development of a solid waste reduction plan;
- Development of an annual audit program for energy consumption, waste streams, and use of renewable resources;
- LEED certification; and/or
- Water conservation and reuse of wastewater and stormwater.

FEIR Mitigation

The FEIR included a separate chapter on mitigation measures. This chapter on mitigation updated the proposed Section 61 Findings. The Section 61 Findings contained a clear commitment to mitigation, an estimate of the individual costs of the proposed mitigation, and the identification of the parties responsible for implementing the mitigation.

In the FEIR, the proponent committed to the following mitigation measures:

- Provide an acceleration lane as well as a deceleration lane, each approximately 750 feet long, for safe access/egress at the site. The site drive approach to the acceleration lane to the Route 146 northbound is recommended to be controlled by a "STOP" sign. The design of the acceleration/deceleration lanes will conform to MHD's standards and will take into account the long range plans for Route 146 in this area. The design will also need to take into account abutting properties.
- At the site drive design, incorporate a raised delta island that meets MHD's design standards in order to better guide motorists on entering and exiting the site.
- As the long range improvement plans for Route 146 progress in the project area, the proponent has committed to work with MHD to make any required alterations to the right-of-way along the site's frontage and the design of the site drive.
- Design and maintain all grading, landscaping, and signing proposed at the Site Drive intersection with Route 146 that will not inhibit or constrain sight distances relative to the driveway.
- Design the stormwater management system with BMPs including deep-sump and hooded catch basins to collect and initially treat stormwater runoff and a conventional stormwater

pipe network to convey the collected stormwater runoff. Runoff will then be routed through water quality swales and/or water quality units for secondary treatment and removal of total suspended solids (TSS). Stormwater will then be directed to infiltration systems to provide groundwater recharge.

I find the FEIR to be adequate and am allowing the project to proceed to the state agencies for permitting. The FEIR contained adequate information on the project impacts and mitigation, and provided the state permitting agencies with sufficient information to understand the environmental consequences of their permit decisions. No further MEPA review is required.

January 30, 2009

Date



for Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

01/13/09 Department of Environmental Protection, Central Regional Office

IAB/ACC/acc