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April 6, 2007

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
ON THE  
NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

PROJECT NAME: Tufts Regional Biosafety Laboratory Project in the  
Grafton Science Park  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Grafton  
PROJECT WATERSHED: Blackstone  
EOEA NUMBER: 11715  
PROJECT PROPONENT: **The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts  
University**  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: March 7, 2007

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M. G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.10 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I have reviewed the Notice of Project Change (NPC) submitted on this project and hereby determine that it **does not require** further MEPA review.

Project Description

The Notice of Project Change (NPC) proposes the Tufts University Regional Biosafety Laboratory (RBL), which will be the first building to be constructed within the Grafton Science Park, formerly known as the Tufts Biomedical Science Park. The Grafton Science Park is located on the western side of Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine's 594-acre Grafton campus. As outlined in a July 1998 Environmental Notification Form (ENF) and a September 1999 Single Environmental Impact Report (SEIR), the Grafton Science Park consists of 13 four-story buildings totaling 702,000 square feet (sf) on 106 acres located off Route 30 in Grafton. The proponent proposed to construct the project in two phases: seven buildings in Phase 1 (348,000 sf) and six

buildings in Phase 2 (354,000 sf). Included in the development was a new access road from Route 30, up to 1,404 parking spaces, a stormwater management system for the park, and water and sewer infrastructure.

The Grafton Science Park received a Certificate from the Secretary of Environmental Affairs on its SEIR in October of 1999, finding that the SEIR adequately and property complied with MEPA. The MEPA Certificate also discussed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Tufts University, the Department of Food and Agriculture and the Grafton Land Trust. This MOA has been executed and Tufts has made a payment to the Grafton Land Trust as mitigation for all Phase 1 impacts. The Science Park's roadways and main drainage structures have been constructed, and the water and sewer infrastructure is in place along Discovery Drive.

### Project Change Description

As outlined in the NPC, the proponent proposes to build a regional biosafety laboratory (RBL) within the Grafton Science Park. The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine will construct the RBL with a \$19.35 million grant awarded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The RBL will contain biosafety level 2 and 3 (BSL-2 and BSL-3) labs, and research will have a special emphasis on diseases that spread from animals to humans. The BSL-3 designation means that the lab will be used to study agents that can be transmitted through the air and cause potentially lethal infection. The addition of the RBL to the Science Park will not result in more square footage than what was previously reviewed in the SEIR.

### Jurisdiction and Permits

The proposed RBL is not subject to MEPA review because it does not exceed any MEPA review thresholds and does not require any state permits or new agency actions for construction. Given public concern about the type of research to be conducted at the RBL, and after consultation with the MEPA Office, the proponent filed the NPC voluntarily as a means of providing public notice about the project.

The project requires review and approval by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). NIH is the lead federal agency for the Environmental Assessment (EA) that will be prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EA will examine all aspects of the project, including the potential for any threat to human health and safety. In January 2007 the Grafton Planning Board approved Tuft's Amended Grafton Campus Master Plan, which included the conceptual plan for the proposed project. The project is now undergoing Project Plan review by the Planning Board.

### Review of the NPC

According to the NPC, the proposed RBL fits well within the development envelope and impact thresholds that were approved for the overall Grafton Science Park.

The proposed 5.4-acre site for the RBL is on the north side of Cornfield Lane at its intersection with Discovery Drive, which is the main entrance road to the Science Park from Route 30. The project will result in the alteration of 2.9 acres of land and the creation of 1.05 acres of new impervious surface. There are no wetland resource areas on the project site.

The project site is located within the Grafton State Historic District which is listed in the State and National Register of Historic Places. During the review of the Grafton Science Park, the Massachusetts Historic Commission (MHC) determined that the project would have no adverse effect (950 CMR 71.07(2)(b)(2)) on the Grafton State Hospital provided that certain conditions were met as outlined in MHC's comments on the SEIR. One of the conditions provides MHC the opportunity to review and comment on the plans for individual buildings in the Science Park as they are developed. In their comments on the NPC, MHC has requested additional information to facilitate its review of the RBL. The proponent should coordinate with MHC on this information request. I also note that MHC is reviewing the RBL plans under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act in conjunction with the NEPA review of the project.

The proponent has submitted detailed information with the NPC regarding safety measures that will be implemented during the construction and operation of the RBL. The RBL will be built to containment standards as outlined in the *Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL)*, Fifth Edition (Department of Health and Human Services, 2005); *National Institutes of Health Design and Policy Guidelines* (NIH, 2003) and the *Tufts University Pre-Construction Biosafety Standard Operating Procedures (BSL-3/ABSL-3)*. The proposed facility will meet all current building codes and standards and will be designed and constructed with applicable wind and seismic codes. The proponent will ensure that all research conducted at the RBL is in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. Tuft's Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) will be responsible for reviewing research protocols and operations for compliance with NIH, CDC, state and local guidelines.


### Conclusion

I have considered whether the change of the project merits a supplemental environmental impact report. The proponent has minimized the potential impacts of the proposed use by its commitment to safety protocols noted above. In addition, I note that all state agency actions with respect to this project have already been taken, and therefore the generation of additional information through a supplemental report would not assist any state agencies in making decisions about permits or financial assistance. To the extent that federal agency action is outstanding, I expect that the environmental assessment to be prepared under NEPA will address safety issues and inform federal agencies about the environmental consequences of the RBL.

Based on a review of the NPC and comments letters submitted to me, I find that the potential impacts of this project do not warrant further MEPA review. I acknowledge the comments submitted on the NPC that raise concerns regarding the potential safety and

public health impacts of the project and direct the proponent to carefully consider the points that have been raised. I am confident that the proponent will implement sufficient measures to ensure that the proposed RBL is designed and constructed to meet the safety standards required for such a facility.

April 6, 2007  
Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

3/22/2007	Massachusetts Historical Commission
3/27/2007	Allison Picone
3/27/2007	Bob Carroll
3/27/2007	Shawna Croteau
3/28/2007	Bob Carroll

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