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May 23, 2008

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME: 20-Year Master Plan for Airport Improvements
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Westfield
PROJECT WATERSHED: Westfield River
EOEA NUMBER: 14206
PROJECT PROPONENT: Westfield-Barnes Airport
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: March 12, 2008

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M.G.L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Sections 11.03 and 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

As outlined in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project consists of a 20-year program of proposed improvements to the Westfield-Barnes Airport. The project site is a municipally-owned, public-use general aviation airport that serves corporate, business and recreational flyers located on 1,200 acres in Westfield, MA. The Airport is also home to the Massachusetts Air National Guard and the Massachusetts Army National Guard. The Airport is under the care and custody of the Westfield Airport Commission pursuant to Chapter 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The Airport facilities consist of two paved runways. The primary runway, Runway 2-20, is 9,000 feet long by 150 feet wide with two taxiways. Taxiway "B" South is a 50-foot wide paved taxiway that runs parallel to the southerly portion of Runway 2-20. The 75-foot wide Taxiway "B" North runs parallel to the northerly portion of Runway 2-20. The crosswind

runway, Runway 15-33 is 5,000 feet long and 100 feet wide with 25-foot wide paved shoulders on each side. Taxiway "A" is a 50-foot wide, paved, full-length parallel taxiway serving Runway 15-33.

The proposed projects outlined in the ENF include several airport improvements scheduled for implementation during the years 2008 through 2022. The proposed improvements were identified in the Airport's Airport Master Plan Updates (1990 and 2004). Several other projects have undergone MEPA review at the Airport, including earlier versions of the Airport's Master Plan. The current Master Plan reflects a change in the Airport's role from cargo uses to corporate uses. The improvements are focused on improving airport safety, compliance with current Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards, airport security, and the Airport's ability to maintain financial self-sufficiency. The improvements include:

- Construct standard Runway Safety Areas (RSAs) on Runway 15-33 by shifting the runway 300 feet to the northwest and constructing 150' wide by 300' long turf RSAs at each runway end (the runway shift will be implemented in order to avoid wetland impacts);
- Removal of the 25-foot wide paved shoulders on Runway 15-33 (approximately 5.4 acres of impervious surface);
- Improve operational safety on the airfield by constructing two aircraft runup areas, one at the Runway 33 end and another on Taxiway "B" South;
- Remove pavement and convert the RSAs serving the Runway 2-20 ends to turf, and construct jet blast pads at each runway end (completed in 2006);
- Construct Taxiway "H" East, approximately 75 foot wide by 1,050 foot long with 25 foot paved shoulders to connect Taxiway "B" to Taxiway "S" in order to eliminate back-taxi operations on Runway 2-20;
- Remove one 10-unit and one 8-unit T-hangar building, and one 3-unit Hex hangar building and replace with fourteen 6-unit T hangar buildings, one 2-unit T-hangar building, and construct associated taxilanes;
- Install a windcone and segmented circle at each end of Runway 2-20 (completed in 2006);
- Install a Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) and Runway End Identifier Lights (REILs) for Runway 16;
- Acquire three parcels of land, totaling approximately 16.9 acres, near the Runway 2 end for potential corporate hangar development;
- Reserve approximately 4 acres for the future construction of apron and helicopter landing areas; and,
- Reserve approximately 4.8 acres for future construction of an airport maintenance center.

The entire Airport is located within Priority and Estimated Habitat for state-listed rare species. The Airport is also located within Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Zone I and II protection areas for public drinking water supply wells and within a high yielding portion of the Barnes Aquifer which provides water to over 60,000 people in Westfield, Easthampton, Southampton and Holyoke. The Airport is located within the Zone II for the City of Westfield Water Wells No. 1, 2, 7 and 8 and within the Zone I for Wells No. 7 and 8. Wells No. 7 and 8 are located immediately to the southeast of Runway 15-33 just outside of the Airport's fence.

Jurisdiction

This project is subject to review pursuant to the following sections of the MEPA regulations: 301 CMR 11.03(1)(b)(2), because it will result in the creation of more than 5 acres of impervious surface; 301 CMR 11.03(6)(b)(4), because the Proponent proposes to construct a new taxiway at an existing airport; and Section 11.03(2)(b)(2) because the project may result in a "take" of an endangered, threatened and/or species of special concern in accordance with M.G.L. c. 131A.

Certain improvement projects will require a new or amended Conservation and Management Permit from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP); Site Plan Approval and an Aquifer Protection Special Permit from the City of Westfield Planning Board; and an Order of Conditions from the Westfield Conservation Commission. Because the Proponent is seeking financial assistance from the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission (MAC), MEPA jurisdiction is broad and extends to all aspects of the project that have the potential to cause significant Damage to the Environment.

Stormwater

The projects identified in the ENF will result in the creation of new impervious surfaces. In total, the improvements will result in an increase of 9.5 acres of impervious surface for a total of 22.1 acres of impervious surface at the site. The ENF indicates that stormwater management at the Airport will comply with newly revised MassDEP's stormwater management regulations. The proposed stormwater management system will use structural and non-structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to treat stormwater runoff. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for industrial activities is currently in place for the Airport. A SWPPP for construction activities will outline erosion and sedimentation control measures to be utilized during construction phases. The Proponent should note comments from MassDEP regarding compliance with the Underground Injection Control (UIC) program for underground stormwater structures.

The location of the proposed project in close proximity to public water supply wells requires that extraordinary care be taken to avoid introducing contaminants to the aquifer. The Proponent must ensure that its proposed stormwater system meets or exceeds the standards in MassDEP's stormwater regulations. The Proponent should continue to work closely with the City of Westfield Water Resources Department and the Barnes Aquifer Protection Advisory Committee (BAPAC) during final project design and in advance of any construction to ensure that drinking water quality and quantity is not adversely impaired.

Rare Species

The project site is located within Priority and Estimated Habitat as indicated in the 12th Edition of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas. The project site is mapped for the Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrepepe carolina*), three grassland bird species, and several moth and butterfly

species. These species are listed pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) (M.G.L. c. 131A) and its implementing regulations. NHESP has stated in its comments on the ENF that it is likely that proposed projects will result in a prohibited “take” of state-listed rare species.

According to the ENF, the Airport has been surveyed for rare species over the past 8 years in cooperation with NHESP. Following the submission of the ENF, the Proponent met with NHESP regarding the permitting of Master Plan projects in response to NHESP concerns about the schedule of projects outlined in the ENF, potential impacts to rare species habitat, and the ability of the Airport to mitigate unavoidable impacts. Based on this consultation, the Proponent will develop a Rare Species Master Plan during the Conservation & Management Permit process. The Master Plan will provide further detail on temporary and permanent impacts associated with each project and will outline a framework for addressing potential rare species regulatory issues. A draft scope of work for the Rare Species Master Plan was submitted to the MEPA office during the review period on the ENF. The Proponent will undertake a detailed habitat assessment for all mapped state-listed species in conjunction with the Master Plan. The Proponent should coordinate closely with NHESP during the development of the Rare Species Master Plan and the planning and design of specific projects to ensure that adverse impacts to rare species are avoided, minimized and mitigated to the maximum extent feasible. The Rare Species Master Plan should be submitted to the MEPA office for the project file.

Based on the information provided to date by the Proponent, NHESP has issued a Determination that the reconstruction of the Runway 15-33 Runway Safety Area (RSA) will not result in a prohibited “take” of state-listed rare species, provided the work does not occur between May 15 and July 31 to avoid the prime nesting season of state-listed birds. The Proponent should note that any changes to the proposed project beyond what is shown on site plans may require an additional filing with NHESP.

Conclusion

Based on a review of the information provided by the Proponent and after consultation with the relevant public agencies, I find that the potential impacts of this project do not warrant further MEPA review. The Proponent should address unresolved rare species issues during the NHESP permitting process. If future planning and/or design for Master Plan projects indicate a significantly higher level of impacts than outlined in the ENF, the Proponent should consult with the MEPA office regarding the need for a Notice of Project Change (NPC).

May 23, 2008

Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

4/3/2008 Barnes Aquifer Protection Advisory Committee
4/4/2008 City of Westfield, Water Resources Department
4/15/2008 Department of Environmental Protection, Western Regional Office
4/29/2008 Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
5/9/2008 Gale Associates, Inc., for the Proponent
5/12/2008 Peter Vickery
5/13/2008 Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

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