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June 19, 2009

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

PROJECT NAME	: Raceway Sediment Remediation Project
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY	: Holyoke
PROJECT WATERSHED	: Connecticut River
EOEA NUMBER	: 14423
PROJECT PROPONENT	: City of Holyoke Gas and Electric Department
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR	: May 20, 2009

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

Project Description

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the City of Holyoke Gas and Electric Department (the Proponent) proposes to install a sub-aqueous cap on a 650 linear foot (lf) section of the No. 2 Overflow Raceway at the Old Gas Works facility located off North Bridge Street in Holyoke. The proposed sediment cap is a component of the Proponent's on-going Limited Phase IV Remedy Implementation Plan (RIP) for the Old Gas Works site (RTN 1-0816) and has been designed to prevent human and environmental receptors from coming into direct contact with manufactured gas plant (MGP) residuals (coal tar) that have come to be located in the sediments located in the No. 2 Overflow Raceway channel.

The Phase IV RIP, including the proposed capping of raceway sediments, is regulated as a Tier IA site remediation activity in accordance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP) 310 CMR 40.0000. The proposed Raceway cap will be constructed with a one-foot layer of sand (approximately 2,000 cubic yards (cy) total)) and a 2-foot layer of 3 inch – 12 inch rip-rap rock (approximately 2,100 cy total) that will serve to armor the sand layer to prevent erosion of the cap from estimated and anticipated water flow velocities to the Raceway from the City's canal system. The proposed remediation project consists of the following project elements:

1) Construction of erosion and sediment controls;
2) Installation of two coal tar heat and recovery wells and numerous dewatering drywells;
3) Site grading/excavation;
4) Sediment cap construction;
5) Post-construction site restoration; and,
6) Post-construction site monitoring.

As currently designed, the Raceway cap remediation project will be completed in October 2009 during the City of Holyoke's annual 10-day canal maintenance period.

Permits and Jurisdiction

The project is undergoing MEPA review pursuant to Section 11.03(3)(b)(1)(d) and 11.03(3)(b)(1)(f) of the MEPA regulations, because the project requires state permitting and results in the alteration of 5,000 or more square feet(sf) of bordering vegetated wetlands (BVW), and land under water wetlands and inland bank. The project will require a 401 Water Quality Certificate from the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The Holyoke Conservation Commission issued an Order of Conditions May 15, 2009, approving the project. The project may require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Programmatic Construction General Permit (CGP) for stormwater discharges from a construction site of over one acre from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and a 404 Programmatic General Permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).

The proponent is not seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the project. MEPA jurisdiction therefore extends to those aspects of the project that are within the subject matter of required or potentially required state permits and that may cause Damage to the Environment as defined in the MEPA regulations. In this case, MEPA jurisdiction extends to issues related to land alteration, water quality and wetlands.

REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

Wetlands

According to the information provided in the ENF, the proposed remediation work will result in the alteration of approximately 19,741 square feet (sf) of BVW, 26,425 sf of land under water wetlands (LUWW) and approximately 1,106 linear feet of inland bank. The proposed sediment capping activities include the re-grading and filling of approximately 650 linear feet of the No. 2 Overflow Raceway with 2,000 cy) of sand and 2,100 cy of rock.

Rare Species

The Raceway remediation site is located within priority and estimated habitat for Shortnose Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Yellow Lampmussel (*Lampsilis cariosa*), and Tidewater Mucket (*Leptodea ochracea*), which are all state listed species under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) (321 CMR 10.02). In their comments, the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has indicated that the project, as currently designed, will not adversely affect any actual resource area habitat. The proponent should notify the MEPA Office of any changes to the proposed project design.

Hazardous Waste Remediation

On February 26, 2009, the Proponent submitted to MassDEP its Limited Phase IV RIP for remediating coal tar contamination in the No.2 Overflow Raceway. The plan includes re-grading and capping the tar-impacted sediments in the Raceway and installing a pair of heating and recovery wells to collect residual subsurface tar from the project site. MassDEP approved the Proponent's capping remedy on August 25, 2005, and specified that the proposed remediation address a 500-foot section of the No.2 Raceway. I note that although this project has been designed as an in-situ remediation project, the Proponent anticipates that a small amount of contaminated sediment (up to 500 cy) may be dredged and removed from the Raceway and transported to an appropriate off-site treatment/disposal facility. The plan also includes the installation of numerous dewatering sump systems throughout the Raceway site to collect residual coal tar-impacted water during project construction. According to the information provided in the ENF, the proposed remediation process may produce a small amount of coal tar-contaminated sediment and water from the excavation activities and dewatering process associated with the proposed remediation activities.

A small amount of contaminated sediment may be excavated and temporarily stored on site to be transported off-site for appropriate disposal. The Proponent proposes to treat and discharge contaminated water collected from the Raceway site to the Holyoke sewer system, or truck the contaminated water off-site for appropriate treatment and disposal. The Proponent must demonstrate to MassDEP that the Proponent has received approval from the City of Holyoke's Department of Public Works to discharge contaminated water collected and treated from the project site to the City's sewer system.

The Proponent should continue to consult with MassDEP's Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup (BWSC) in the final design of this project to evaluate the Proponent's need for retaining an on-site Licensed Site Professional (LSP) to assist in the project's construction, and to coordinate the proposed raceway sediment capping project with the Proponent's other Limited Phase IV RIP remediation projects in the area. The Proponent should ensure that the contractors and sub-contractors for the proposed Raceway remediation project maintain an emergency response plan for performing appropriate response actions in the event contamination is encountered during project construction.

Air Quality

According to the comments received from MassDEP, the installation of a sub-aqueous cap must conform to current Air Pollution Control Regulations. The Proponent should implement measures to alleviate dust, noise, and odor nuisance conditions that may occur during the construction activities. These measures must comply with the MassDEP's Bureau of Waste Prevention (BWP) Regulations 310 CMR 7.01, 7.09, and 7.10.

Erosion and Sedimentation Control

To isolate construction areas from residual on-site water flows and control sediment impacts to aquatic resources in the project area, the Proponent has committed to install erosion controls (sheet piling, diversion pumps and porta-dam structures) and sedimentation fences within and around project site drainage structures, dewatering and decontamination areas, excavation areas and staging areas. As described above, contaminated sediment excavated from the Raceway will be temporarily stockpiled and dewatered on site and subsequently trucked to an appropriate off-site receiving facility.

Traffic

As described in the ENF, the use of truck transportation will service the project site.

I ask the Proponent work closely with the City of Holyoke, private property owners and others located within and adjacent to the project site and/or along the proposed truck haul routes to identify the locations of all public and private water supply wells, and other sensitive receptors, and to ensure that they will not be impacted by the proposed project's activities. All construction-related refueling and equipment maintenance activities should be conducted under cover on impervious surface areas with containment, and outside of any wetland resource areas, endangered species habitat areas, and wellhead protection areas. The Proponent should implement construction-period diesel emission mitigation, which could include the installation of after-engine emission controls such as diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) or diesel particulate filters (DPFs). MassDEP's guidance document, "Diesel Engine Retrofits in the Construction Industry – A How to Guide", is available on MassDEP's website at: http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/diesel/conretro.pdf. According to the Proponent, all temporary accessways, and project staging areas will be removed and all temporary alterations to wetland resource areas will be replanted.

Conclusion

The review of the ENF has served to demonstrate that the impacts of the project do not warrant the preparation of an EIR. The proponent can resolve any remaining issues during the permitting process. I conclude that no further MEPA review is required at this time.

June 19, 2009
DATE

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary

Comments received:

06/09/09 The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)
06/09/09 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) – WERO

ENF #14423
IAB/NCZ/ncz