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January 9, 2008

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

PROJECT NAME: Springfield Cables Project  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Springfield  
PROJECT WATERSHED: Connecticut/Chicopee  
EEA NUMBER: 14148  
PROJECT PROPONENT: Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO)  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: December 10, 2007

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 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

According to the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project involves upgrades to Greater Springfield's electric transmission system to bring the system into compliance with electric reliability standards set by the North American Reliability Council (NERC), the Northeast Power Coordinating Council (NPCC), the New England Power Pool (NEPP), and the Independent System Operator – New England (ISO-NE). The project consists of six components:

1. Retirement of an existing underground 115-kilovolt (kV) high-pressure fluid filled pipe-type cable circuit between Western Massachusetts Electric Company's (WMECO) Breckwood and East Springfield substations;
2. Construction of a new underground 115-kV transmission line from the existing Clinton

- Substation to the existing East Springfield Substation;
3. Construction of a new underground 115-kV transmission line from the existing Breckwood Substation to the existing East Springfield Substation;
  4. Modifications to the existing Clinton, East Springfield and Breckwood Substations;
  5. Construction of a new switching station (the "Cadwell Switching Station") at WMECO's existing East Springfield Work Center on Cadwell Drive; and,
  6. Reconstruction of the existing 115-kV overhead transmission lines between the East Springfield Substation and the proposed Cadwell Switching Station.

According to the ENF, the project will improve reliability during emergencies, reduce the need for additional generating facilities, and help to meet existing electric demands under severe emergency conditions and future demands under both normal and emergency conditions.

The Proponent conducted a comprehensive analysis of project and routing alternatives including: 1) system alternatives (no action alternative, energy conservation and demand response alternatives, distributed generation, and generation); 2) transmission planning alternatives; 3) cable technology alternatives; and 4) route alternatives. The ENF included a detailed discussion of the alternatives analysis. According to the ENF, to the greatest extent practicable, the proposed routes are confined to existing public right-of-ways (ROWs), WMECO ROWs, and adjacent lands. Proposed routes have been selected to avoid impacts to environmental resources. The ENF discusses both a preferred and noticed alternative for each transmission line route.

### Jurisdiction

This project is subject to review pursuant to Section 11.03(7)(b)(4) of the MEPA regulations because it will result in the construction of greater than one mile of new electric transmission lines with a capacity of more than 69 kV along new right of way. The project involves the installation of approximately 7.7 miles of 115-kV underground transmission line predominantly within public ROW that is not currently used as transmission line ROW. Depending on final design, the project may also exceed the MEPA review threshold at 301 CMR 11.03(6)(b)(2)(b) because it will result in the removal of more than five public shade trees with a diameter breast height of more than 14 inches.

The project requires the following permits and/or approvals: a Category II Programmatic General Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE); a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Stormwater Permit and General Construction Dewatering Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); a Petition of "Right of Convenience and Necessity" and a "Petition for Zoning Exemption" from the Department of Public Utilities (DPU); a Petition for Approval of Construction from the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB); a Railroad Crossing Lease and/or Permit from the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT); a Highway Encroachment Permit from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway); review from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP); review from the Massachusetts Historical

Commission (MHC); an Order of Conditions from the Springfield Conservation Commission; and a number of other local permits and/or approvals from the City of Springfield.

The Proponent is not seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction applies to those aspects of the project within the subject matter of required or potentially required state permits with the potential to cause Damage to the Environment. In this case, MEPA jurisdiction extends to energy, wetlands, rare species, historic resources and construction period issues.

### Wetlands

The project will occur mainly in public streets that are adjacent to or cross several resource areas. The Proponent has conducted wetland delineations to assess the presence of jurisdictional resource areas in the vicinity of preferred and alternative project facilities. In areas where the ROWs cross wetland resources, the Proponent will install the transmission facilities above or below the existing drainage structures within the public road ROWs to avoid direct impacts to the waterways. The project will not result in direct wetland impacts; however limited portions of the transmission facilities will be located in upland areas that may be within the buffer zone or within portions of the 25-foot Riverfront Areas as measured from perennial streams and rivers in the City of Springfield. The Proponent will submit a Notice of Intent to the Springfield Conservation Commission for work activities within the buffer zone. The Proponent should note comments from MassDEP regarding portions of the project that may be exempt under the Wetlands Protection Act. The Proponent will develop and implement a project-specific soil erosion and sedimentation control plan and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to minimize adverse impacts to resource areas during construction.

The Proponent will request a Determination from MassDEP's Waterways program as to whether a Chapter 91 License is required for proposed water crossings.

### Rare Species

According to NHESP, portions of the proposed project are located within Priority and Estimated Habitat as indicated in the 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas. The project will also occur within the mapped habitat of the Blue-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*) and the Many-fruited False-loosestrife (*Ludwigia polycarpa*). These species are state-listed as "Special Concern" and "Endangered", respectively, and are protected pursuant to the provisions of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) (M.G.L. c. 131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.00).

NHESP has determined that the project will not result in a "take" of the many-fruited False-loosestrife but states in its comment letter that it is unable at this time to make a determination whether or not the project will result in a "take" of the Blue-spotted salamander. In response to NHESP's letter, the Proponent has submitted additional information to the MEPA

office and NHESP clarifying that priority and estimated habitats for this species occur only adjacent to the Noticed Alternative Route for a portion of the proposed project from the Breckwood Substation to the proposed Cadwell Switching Station. No Blue-spotted salamander habitats are located adjacent to any of the preferred routes presented in the ENF. The Proponent intends to permit and construct only the preferred route alternatives but should continue to consult with NHESP regarding filing requirements as outlined in NHESP's comment letter on the ENF.

### Historic Resources

The Proponent submitted a Project Notification Form (PNF) to the MHC with an archaeological predictive modeling report developed for the project. MHC's review of the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Resources and the predictive modeling report has determined that several of the proposed construction routes associated with the project have the potential to affect recorded and unknown historic and archaeological resources. MHC has requested that once final project routes are determined, the Proponent conduct a cultural resource management study for the project. Guidance regarding the cultural resource management study is outlined in MHC's comment letter on the ENF. The Proponent should continue to consult with MHC and the Springfield Historical Commission in order to avoid, minimize or mitigate potential adverse effects to significant historical and cultural resources.

### Construction Period Issues


The ENF presented a detailed discussion of construction procedures, sequencing and mitigation. The Proponent will enter into a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City of Springfield that will outline mitigation for temporary and permanent impacts associated with the project.

The project must comply with MassDEP Air Pollution Control and Solid Waste Regulations. The Proponent should note comments from MassDEP regarding measures that must be taken if contaminated areas are encountered during project activities. MassDEP's comment letter includes a list of active disposal sites within the proposed work area. As outlined in the ENF, if excavation activities or transmission cable installation occur in potentially contaminated areas, the Proponent will prepare a Utility-Related Abatement Measure (URAM) Plan for submission to MassDEP per the requirements of the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP).

### 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 the preparation of an EIR. No further MEPA review is required.

January 9, 2008  
Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments Received:

- 12/26/2007 City of Springfield, Planning & Economic Development
- 12/27/2007 Massachusetts Historical Commission
- 12/27/2007 **Division of Fisheries and Wildlife**, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
- 12/31/2007 Department of Environmental Protection, Western Regional Office
- 1/7/2008 ENSR Corporation, for the Proponent

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