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September 7, 2006

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

PROJECT NAME : Agawam Rotary Interchange Project
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Agawam
PROJECT WATERSHED : Connecticut River
EOEA NUMBER : 13845
PROJECT PROPONENT : Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway)
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : August 8, 2006

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).

This project consists of replacement of the Agawam Rotary to address traffic congestion and safety issues. The site is within the Town of Agawam and surrounded by existing residential areas. The site is located to the south of the Westfield River and to the west of the Connecticut River. According to the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (MassWildlife) Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), portions of the site are located within Priority Habitat and Estimated Habitat for rare species associated with the Westfield River and the Connecticut River. A small wetlands area is located to the east of Route 5 adjacent to the Westfield River.

The Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) is proposing to replace the rotary with the following: construction of a flyover ramp from Route 5 northbound to Route 57 westbound; reconstruction of Route 5 southbound as an at-grade intersection with Route 57; construction of a roadway connection from Meadow Street on the east side of the rotary to the new Route 5 southbound/Route 57 intersection, including a new Route 5 underpass; and a modified roadway connection from Meadow Street on the west side of the rotary to Route 5 southbound. A bikeway connection will be included from the Connecticut Riverwalk bikeway along Meadow Street/River Road on the east side of the rotary across the interchange area to the

Meadow Street neighborhood on the west side of the rotary. MassHighway has indicated that the project will reduce impervious surfaces by approximately .4 acres and will be designed to meet the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Stormwater Management Policy. In addition, a noise barrier will be constructed on the south side of Route 57 to minimize impacts to adjacent residential areas.

MassHighway voluntarily submitted the project for MEPA review. The project does not exceed any MEPA thresholds. The project may require a Conservation and Management Permit from NHESP and it may require an Order of Conditions from the Agawam Conservation Commission (and hence a Superseding Order from MassDEP in the event the local Order is appealed). A portion of the project will be funded with state transportation funds.

The rotary averages 43 crashes per year and is ranked as #63 on MassHighway's statewide list of the top 1,000 accident locations. The project is included in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). MassHighway evaluated six alternative designs to address the safety and capacity issues at the rotary. In consultation with the Town of Agawam, the City of Springfield and the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council (EDC), MassHighway selected the Alternative described above (Alternative 1A Modified).

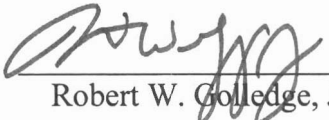
NHESP comments indicate that its primary concern with the project is the potential for increasing impervious surfaces near the Westfield River and the Connecticut River and impairment of water quality during construction. The comments emphasize the importance of effective erosion control and indicate that the selected alternative is one of three presented that minimizes impervious surfaces within rare species habitat.

The ENF does not include a conceptual design or plan for the bikeway connection. I expect that MassHighway will consult with the Town and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to ensure the design is consistent with existing and planned connections.

The review of the ENF has served to adequately disclose the potential impacts associated with this project. Based on the information in the ENF and after consultation with relevant public agencies, I find that outstanding issues can be addressed through state and local permitting. No further MEPA review is required.

September 7, 2006

Date


Robert W. Colledge, Jr.

Comments Received:

8/29/06	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
8/25/06	Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)
8/24/06	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

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