



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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October 18, 2006

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## CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

PROJECT NAME : Hanscom Field Runway 5/23 Safety Area Improvements  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Bedford, Concord, and Lincoln  
PROJECT WATERSHED : Shawsheen River  
EOEA NUMBER : 13594  
PROJECT PROPONENT : Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport)  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : August 8, 2006

As Secretary of Environmental Affairs, I hereby determine that the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) submitted on the above project **adequately and properly** complies with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L., c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and with its implementing regulations (301 CMR 11.00).

As described in the DEIR, the proposed project consists of regrading and other improvements to runway safety areas at Runways 5/23 at Hanscom Field. These improvements will not have any effect on normal runway operations, and there will be no runway expansion, no additional pavement, and no increase in capacity. The runway safety area (RSA) is a defined surface surrounding the runway and is prepared or suitable for reducing the risk of damage to aircraft in the event of an excursion from the runway. An RSA also provides access to fire fighting and rescue equipment during such incidents. The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) design standard for runway end safety areas at Runways 5/23 is 500 feet wide by 1,000 feet long. The Runways 5/23 do not meet this FAA design standard, and the FAA has requested that the safety areas be improved.

The Runway 5 end RSA is located within the towns of Concord and Lincoln, while the Runway 23 end RSA is located within Bedford. The project would regrade turf areas which do not meet FAA design standards at the Runway 5 end RSA. At Runway 23 end RSA, the proponent would widen the existing RSA from 300 to 500 feet, grade the RSA to conform to FAA standards, relocate a portion of the perimeter access road to the edge of the RSA, and

relocate the perimeter security fence in conjunction with the road relocation. The proponent is proposing a wetland compensation plan involving the restoration/creation of wetlands to mitigate for project-related impacts to wetlands. About 32.5 acres of the 1,300-acre Hanscom Field site would be impacted by the project.

This project is subject to a mandatory EIR. The project will require a Superseding Order of Conditions, a Variance from the Wetlands Protection Act, and a Section 401 Water Quality Certificate from the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The project must comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for stormwater discharges from a construction site. It will need a Section 404 Programmatic General Permit (Category 2) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Because an agency of the Commonwealth is the proponent, MEPA jurisdiction extends to all aspects of the project that may have significant environmental impacts.

### **Review of the DEIR:**

The DEIR provided a detailed project description with a summary/history of the project. It included existing and proposed site plans. The project does not include any project phasing. The DEIR described each state agency action required for the project. It demonstrated that the project is consistent with the applicable performance standards. The DEIR contained sufficient information to allow the permitting agencies to understand the environmental consequences of their official actions related to the project.

The DEIR summarized the seven alternatives, which the proponent developed for the project. The proponent demonstrated with these alternatives that it has evaluated alternatives with the ability to avoid or minimize wetland related impacts. The analysis presented the alternative configurations at the site and identified the advantages and disadvantages of the Preferred Alternative. The DEIR provided a comparative analysis of the alternatives in Tables 4-2 and 4-3 that showed the differences between the environmental impacts associated with each of the alternatives.

The DEIR addressed the significance of the wetland resources on site, including public and private water supply; riverfront areas; flood control; storm damage prevention; fisheries; shellfish; and wildlife habitat. It identified the location of nearby public water supplies and wells.

All resource area boundaries, riverfront areas, applicable buffer zones, and 100-year flood elevations were delineated on a plan. According to the proponent, the Bedford Conservation Commission has accepted the resource area boundaries. The proponent has identified that the project will impact the following wetland resource areas: 90,883 square feet (sf) of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW); 875 sf of Land Under Water (LUW); 191,225 sf of buffer zone, and 530 sf of Bank. It is proposing two BVW replication areas in Bedford that will create approximately 137,120 sf of BVW (a ratio of 1.5 to 1.0).

The DEIR provided a detailed wetlands replication plan, which included: replication location(s) delineated on plans, elevations, groundwater elevations, the hydrology of areas to be altered and replicated, list of wetlands plant species in areas to be altered and the proposed wetland replication species, planned construction sequence, and a discussion of the required performance standards and monitoring.

The DEIR provided the information required by MassDEP for requesting a variance. It provided evidence of an overriding public interest that is associated with the project (airport safety). It provided a summary of the project site's habitat assessment. The DEIR stated that the project will not affect any state-listed species. The project will be creating additional grassland areas.

The DEIR evaluated potential drainage impacts on water resources from the project. It included a detailed description of the existing runways' drainage system design in the construction area and identified any proposed changes. Proposed activities, including construction mitigation, erosion and sedimentation control, and drainage discharges or overland flow into wetland areas, were evaluated. The proponent is not proposing any changes to stormwater runoff patterns. The DEIR addressed the performance standards of MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy. It demonstrated that the project is consistent with this policy.

The DEIR discussed the consistency of the project with the provisions of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for stormwater discharges from construction sites. It included a discussion of best management practices employed to meet the NPDES requirements in Appendix E.

The DEIR included photographs of the current conditions in the project area (area proposed for clearing). It didn't identify any impacts on the Minuteman National Historical Park.

The DEIR included a construction management plan that described the project's phasing, erosion and sedimentation controls, monitoring, and contingencies.

The FEIR should resolve the remaining issues outlined below, as required by this Certificate. It should include a copy of this Certificate.

**Project Description:**

The FEIR should provide a detailed project description with a summary/history of the project. It should include existing and proposed site plans.

**Wetlands/Habitat:**

The FEIR should discuss Tables 6-1 and 6-2 from the DEIR. In these tables and in the accompanying text, it appears that the proponent is proposing wetland replication in wetland resource areas. MassDEP has requested that the FEIR consider changes to the replication areas to

avoid and minimize additional alteration to wetland resource areas, and I agree with this request. The proponent should contact the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program to discuss endangered species concerns prior to submitting the FEIR.

**Stormwater:**

The FEIR should include a draft Pollution Prevention Plan. The proponent should propose additional improvements to its existing stormwater system in order to bring the project into compliance with MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy and Redevelopment Standard 7 when making a case for its request for a variance from the Wetlands Protection Act.

**Construction Management:**

The FEIR should describe the amount of fill material required and estimate the number of truck trips per day and the time period involved.

**Mitigation:**

The FEIR should include a separate chapter on mitigation measures. It should outline the proponent's wetland replication areas as part of its mitigation package.

This chapter on mitigation should include a proposed Section 61 Finding for DEP. The proposed Section 61 Finding should contain a clear commitment to mitigation, an estimate of the individual costs of the proposed mitigation and the identification of the parties responsible for implementing the mitigation. A schedule for the implementation of mitigation should also be included. The DEIR did not provide any cost estimates for mitigation measures such as wetland replication or the proposed schedule for completing this work.

In the DEIR, the proponent committed to replicating 3.18 acres of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands.

**Response to Comments:**

The FEIR should include copies of the comment letters. It should respond to the comments received to the extent that the comments are within the subject matter of this scope.

**Circulation:**

The FEIR should be circulated in compliance with Section 11.16 of the MEPA regulations and copies should also be sent to the list of "comments received" below and to Bedford, Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington officials. A copy of the EIR should be made available for public review at each of the public libraries in each of the four communities.

EOEA #13594

DEIR Certificate

October 18, 2006

October 18, 2006  
Date

  
Robert W. Golledge, Jr.

Cc: Nancy Baker, DEP/NERO

Comments received:

ShhAir, 10/9/06

ShhAir, 10/10/06

Julian J. Bussgang, 10/11/06

MassWildlife, 10/11/06

DEP/NERO, 10/11/06

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