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November 8, 2007

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

PROJECT NAME: Atlas Box & Crating Site Development
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Sutton
PROJECT WATERSHED: Blackstone
EOEA NUMBER: 14117
PROJECT PROPONENT: Atlas Box, LLC
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: October 9, 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 **requires** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project involves the construction of an office, manufacturing and warehouse facility on an approximately 31.88 acre site on the easterly side of Route 146 in Sutton, MA. The Proponent, Atlas Box & Crating Company is a global packaging company that provides protective packaging to the automotive, medical and electronics industries.

The project will be constructed in two phases. The first phase of the building will be approximately 226,400 square feet (sf); Phase 2 will consist of approximately 209,000 sf of additional building space. The subject property is currently unimproved; however, recent activities on the site included an earth removal operation. Access to the project will be from the Worcester-Providence Turnpike (Route 146). The project is anticipated to generate approximately 1,728 new vehicle trips per day and require the construction of 329 parking spaces.

The project site has several jurisdictional wetland resource areas, including the 200-foot Riverfront Area to Cold Spring Brook, which is located to the west of the property. The project will result in Buffer Zone impacts only. The project site also lies within a Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Zone II of a public water supply. The project site was recently the subject of a land-taking by the Wilkinsville Water District in order to comply with the 400-foot Zone I radius for the new public water supply. In exchange for the property taking, the Proponent has been assured a connection to the water distribution system from the new well. The expected water demand for the new facility is 7,670 gallons per day (gpd). Wastewater from the project will be treated in a private on-site soil absorption system. The total sewage design flow for the project is 8,000 gpd.

Jurisdiction

The project is undergoing environmental review and requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report pursuant to Section 11.03(1)(a)(2) of the MEPA regulations because it requires state permits and because the project will result in the creation of more than 10 acres of new impervious surface. The project also meets ENF review thresholds for transportation at 301 CMR 11.03(6)(b)(14) because it will generate more than 1,000 new average daily trips on roadways providing access to a single location and result in the construction of more than 150 new parking spaces.

The project requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); a Highway Access Permit from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD); an Order of Conditions (OOC) from the Sutton Conservation Commission (and therefore a Superceding Order of Conditions from the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) if the local Order is appealed); Site Plan Approval from the Sutton Planning Board; and a Special Permit from the Sutton Zoning Board of Appeals.

Because the proponent is not seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the project, MEPA jurisdiction is limited to those aspects of the project that may cause significant Damage to the Environment and that are within the subject matter of required or potentially required state permits. In this case, jurisdiction extends to transportation, wetlands and stormwater.

SCOPE

General

The Draft EIR (DEIR) should follow Section 11.07 of the MEPA regulations for outline and content, as modified by this Scope. The DEIR should include a copy of this Certificate and the attached comments. The DEIR should include a thorough description of the project,

including a detailed description of construction methods and phasing and any changes to the project since the filing of the ENF. The DEIR should include a brief description of each state permit or agency action required or potentially required, and should demonstrate that the project will meet applicable performance standards. In accordance with Executive Order No. 385, "Planning for Growth" and Section 11.03 (3)(a) of the MEPA regulations, the DEIR should discuss the consistency of the project with local and regional growth management and open space plans. The proponent should also provide an update on the local permitting process for the project.

The DEIR should respond to the comments received to the extent that comments are within the subject matter of this scope. Each comment letter should be reprinted in the DEIR. The DEIR should be circulated in compliance with Section 11.16 of the MEPA regulations and copies should be sent to commenters as listed below and to Town of Sutton officials. A copy of the DEIR should be made available for review at the Sutton Public Library.

Alternatives

The DEIR requires a comprehensive alternatives analysis in order to ascertain which site layout minimizes overall environmental impacts and reduces the amount of impervious surface on site. The alternatives analysis should clearly demonstrate consistency with the objectives of MEPA review, one of which is to document the means by which the proponent plans to avoid, minimize or mitigate Damage to the Environment to the maximum extent feasible. In addition to the No-Build Alternative and the Preferred Alternative, the DEIR should discuss alternative building configurations that might result in fewer impacts, particularly related to the creation of impervious surface and buffer zone impacts. The analysis does not necessarily require a reduction in the development's building program to be considered adequate, but it does require an analysis of alternative designs and techniques for minimizing the impacts associated with the project. The DEIR should fully explain any trade-offs inherent in the alternatives analysis, such as increased impacts on some resources to avoid impacts to other resources.

Stormwater

The project will result in the creation of 26.57 acres of new impervious surface, including 16.8 acres of roadways and new pavement, and 9.77 acres of rooftop. According to the ENF, the stormwater management system for the project will consist of best management practices (BMPs) including deep-sump and hooded catch basins to collect and initially treat stormwater runoff and a conventional stormwater pipe network to convey the collected stormwater runoff. Runoff will then be routed through water quality swales and/or water quality units for secondary treatment and removal of total suspended solids (TSS). Stormwater will then be directed to infiltration systems to provide groundwater recharge.

The DEIR should include a detailed drainage plan that provides drainage calculations, pre- and post-construction run off rates and a detailed description of stormwater BMPs. The DEIR should provide a discussion of how the proposed stormwater management system would

comply with MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy (SMP) guidelines. The DEIR should also include a drainage analysis of the state highway culverts and should describe possible impacts to the MassHighway drainage system in Route 146.

The project site is located within a Zone II for a Wilkinsville Water District public drinking water well. The location of the proposed project in a Zone II requires that extraordinary care be taken to avoid introducing contaminants to groundwater. The Proponent must ensure that its proposed stormwater system meets or exceeds MassDEP's stormwater guidelines, and the DEIR should address what additional precautions will be taken to avoid the release of pollutants into surface water discharged from the site. The DEIR should identify if any operations conducted on the project site pose any dangers to groundwater or are a prohibited land use in a Zone II.

The DEIR should include an analysis of opportunities for recharge of runoff from impervious areas both from rooftops and other areas; improved source control of runoff throughout the site; and enhanced control of pollutants of concern (especially sediments, nutrients, metals and petroleum-based pollutants). The Proponent should consider using porous pavement in lower use parking areas, as well as creating rain gardens in parking lot islands and at lot edges for stormwater management and infiltration.

The DEIR should describe an operations and maintenance program for the drainage system to ensure its effectiveness including a schedule for maintenance and identification of responsible parties. The maintenance program should outline the actual maintenance operations, sweeping schedule, snow removal and de-icing policies, responsible parties, and back-up systems. The Proponent should commit to the use of a salt-substitute for winter use and should address how snow will be managed and stored on site.

I encourage the proponent to consider Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in site design and storm water management plans. LID techniques can reduce impacts to land and water resources by conserving natural systems and hydrologic functions. The primary tools of LID are landscaping features and naturally vegetated areas, which encourage detention, infiltration and filtration of stormwater on-site. Other tools include water conservation and use of pervious surfaces. For more information on LID, visit <http://www.mass.gov/envir/lid/>. Other LID resources include the national LID manual (Low Impact Development Design Strategies: An Integrated Design Approach), which can be found on the EPA website at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid/>. The DEIR should include a discussion of any LID measures that could be incorporated into project design. The Proponent should present a discussion of limitations to the use of LID techniques in drinking water protection zones.

Wetlands

Approximately 5.5 acres of the 31.88 acre project site are occupied by bordering vegetated wetlands and intermittent streams. The Proponent has filed an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) with the Town of Sutton Conservation Commission. No impacts to wetland resource areas are anticipated as part of the project; however there will be

some alterations in the 100-foot buffer zone. The Proponent will file a Notice of Intent with the Sutton Conservation Commission for buffer zone impacts. The DEIR should provide an update on the local wetlands permitting process for the project.

Traffic

Access to the site will be from Route 146 northbound. The ENF included a Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS) to analyze the impact of the project on the state highway infrastructure and to evaluate the proposed access design. According to comments from the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), the TIAS was prepared in conformance with EEA/EOT guidelines and has provided an adequate analysis of project-related traffic. The analysis examined the Route 146 intersection with Boston Road and the Route 146 ramp intersections with Central Turnpike. The analysis of existing conditions indicates that the unsignalized intersections of the Route 146 off-ramps with Central Turnpike operate at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS). The signalized intersection of Route 146 with Boston Road is a high volume intersection that currently functions at LOS F during the morning and evening peak.

The TIAS indicated that the site driveway will operate at LOS C and LOS D during the weekday morning and evening peak hour, respectively. The Route 146 northbound off-ramp will continue to operate at the same LOS under the Build condition, with the exception of the southbound turn lane which will degrade from a B to a C during the morning peak and from D to F during the evening peak. The Route 146 southbound off-ramp will continue to operate at the same LOS under the Build condition, with the exception of the southbound left turn which will degrade from B to C during the morning peak and from D to F during the evening peak. In response to comments from EOT, the DEIR should provide a more in-depth analysis of the northbound and southbound left-turn ramps to address anticipated traffic deficiencies.

The intersection of Route 146 with Boston Road will continue to operate at LOS F in the Build condition, and increased delays for some approaches are anticipated. Existing operational deficiencies along Route 146 have been identified in an Executive Office of Transportation Route 146 Transportation Study (December 2005). The study identified short and long term improvements, including a grade separation of Route 146 and Boston Road. In addition to the recommendations outlined in the study, which will generally improve conditions on Route 146, the Proponent has proposed a series of actions to improve traffic operation and safety in the vicinity of the project site driveway. The following improvements are proposed:

- ♦ The Proponent will provide an acceleration and deceleration lane, each approximately 750 feet long for safe access and egress at the site.
- ♦ The site drive will incorporate a raised delta island that meets MassHighway design standards in order to better guide motorists exiting and entering the site.
- ♦ The design of the site drive will take into account the long range improvement plans for Route 146 which may require alterations to the right-of-way.
- ♦ The Proponent will ensure that grading, landscaping and signage at the site drive will not inhibit or constrain site distances relative to the driveway.

The DEIR should include a commitment to implement the above referenced traffic mitigation measures and should describe the timing and cost of their implementation based on project phasing. The DEIR should include conceptual plans for the proposed mitigation that are of sufficient detail to verify the feasibility of constructing such improvements, including lane widths and offsets, layout lines and jurisdictions and adjacent land uses. The proposed mitigation plan should be updated to include measures which may improve service at the Route 146 off-ramps/Central Turnpike ramp locations.

In its comments on the ENF, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Committee (CMRPC) notes that the Town of Sutton, MassHighway and the consultant teams for a number of developments along Route 146 have held discussions regarding potential cumulative impacts of proposed developments in the vicinity of the project site. In the DEIR, the Proponent should present a discussion of this effort and should discuss how the project and proposed mitigation will not preclude or could advance the improvements outlined in the Route 146 Transportation Study.

Sustainable Development

The Proponent should evaluate sustainable design alternatives that can serve to avoid or minimize potential environmental impacts. Such alternatives may also reduce project development and long-term operational costs. The DEIR should discuss sustainable design alternatives evaluated by the proponent and describe measures proposed to avoid and minimize environmental impacts. Such measures may include:

- ♦ Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification;
- ♦ Water conservation measures such as low-flow urinals and reuse of wastewater and stormwater;
- ♦ Ecological landscaping;
- ♦ Optimization of natural day lighting, passive solar gain, and natural cooling;
- ♦ An annual audit program for energy and water use, and waste generation;
- ♦ Energy-efficient Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC), lighting systems, and use of solar preheating of makeup air;
- ♦ Use of building supplies and materials that are non-toxic, made from recycled materials, and made with low embodied energy;
- ♦ Use of green roofs or high-albedo roofing materials;
- ♦ Use of building materials with recycled content;
- ♦ Use of low-VOC adhesives, sealants, paints, carpets and wood;
- ♦ Conduct 3rd party building commissioning to ensure energy performance; or,
- ♦ Track energy performance of building and develop strategy to maintain efficiency.


Construction Period Impacts

The DEIR should include a discussion of construction phasing, evaluate potential impacts associated with construction activities, and propose feasible measures to avoid or eliminate these impacts. The Proponent must comply with MassDEP’s Solid Waste and Air Quality Control regulations during construction. The Proponent should implement measures to alleviate dust, noise and odor nuisance conditions which may occur during the construction activities. I encourage the Proponent to work with MassDEP to implement construction-period diesel emission mitigation through its Diesel Retrofit Program.

Mitigation

The DEIR should contain a separate chapter on mitigation measures. The chapter on mitigation should include a draft Letter of Commitment for use by MHD as its Section 61 Finding. The Letter of Commitment should contain a clear commitment to mitigation, an estimate of the individual costs of the proposed mitigation, the identification of the parties responsible for implementation of the mitigation, and a schedule for the implementation of the mitigation.

November 8, 2007
Date


Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

- 10/23/2007 Department of Environmental Protection, Central Regional Office
- 10/29/2007 Executive Office of Transportation
- 10/29/2007 Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

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