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December 10, 2008

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

PROJECT NAME : Read Street Substation Upgrade and 9L6 Feeder
Installation Project
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Attleboro
PROJECT WATERSHED : Ten Mile River
EOEA NUMBER : 14335
PROJECT PROPONENTS : Massachusetts Electric Company (dba National Grid)
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : November 10, 2008

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 hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The project consists of equipment installation at the Read Street substation and installation of 13.2 kilovolt (kV) circuit (9L6 feeder) along an approximately one mile length of existing right-of-way. The proposed feeder will be attached to existing utility poles between the Read Street substation and Newport Avenue (Route 1A). The substation is surrounded by an extensive wetland system and some of the existing utility poles are located within wetland resource areas.

The proposed project is undergoing environmental review because it exceeds a MEPA review threshold and requires a state agency action. The project is undergoing review pursuant to Section 11.03(3)(b)(d) of the MEPA regulations because it will result in alteration of 5,000 or more square feet (sf) of Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW) and Section 11.03(3)(b)(f) because it will result in alteration of one-half acre or more of other wetlands. The proposed wetlands impacts are temporary and will result from placement of swamp mats in resource areas to access existing utility poles.

The project requires a 401 Water Quality Certificate from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and an Order of Conditions from the Attleboro Conservation Commission (and, on appeal only, a Superseding Order from MassDEP). The project requires a Section 404 permit pursuant to the Federal Clean Water Act from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project may require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The proponent is not seeking financial assistance from an agency of the Commonwealth. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction is limited to those aspects of the project that are within the subject matter of any 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 wetlands, water quality, and stormwater.

The Environmental Notification Form (ENF) includes a description of the project with site plans. The ENF identifies the location of potential impacts, quantifies impacts to wetland resources, and proposes measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts. The proponent considered an alternative consisting of construction of a new substation and two feeders on Pine Street in Seekonk. This off-site alternative was not selected due to significantly higher project costs and construction timeline. The no-action alternative was also considered and rejected because the existing feeders are expected to be overloaded by the summer of 2009.

The proposed substation upgrade work will be confined within the footprint of the existing fence-line of the Read Street substation and will not occur within wetland resource areas. The substation upgrade will include alteration within the 100-foot buffer zone to BVW and inland bank. All equipment will enter the substation through the existing paved driveway off Read Street.


As described in the ENF, some of the existing utility poles that need to be accessed for installation of the proposed feeder are located within wetland resource areas along the right-of-way between Read Street and Newport Avenue. The project will result in temporary impacts to BVW (12,800 sf), Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF) (8,900 sf), and Riverfront Area (2,500 sf) from the use of swamp matting to cross wetland areas and access the utility poles. The swamp matting (12,800 sf) is proposed to minimize compression of soils, rutting and loss of vegetation in wetland areas. Some of the existing poles are accessible from upland areas and are located within BLSF, Riverfront Area and wetland buffer zone areas. The proponent has proposed to implement erosion control measures between the work areas and the wetland areas to minimize impacts to wetlands from soil runoff. The proponent has also committed to restore any disturbed areas by re-establishing grades, repairing vehicle ruts, and stabilizing and seeding disturbed areas using a native seed mix.

The project also involves some shrub and tree removal within the right-of-way where required for equipment access and structure replacement, and to provide clearance between vegetation and conductors as mandated by the National Electric Safety Code. As noted in the ENF, the proponent is not proposing to increase the cleared width of the right-of-way.

I am satisfied that the ENF has sufficiently defined the nature and general elements of the project, and has proposed measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts. Based on review of the ENF and comments received, and in consultation with state agencies, I have determined that no further MEPA review is required. The project may proceed to state permitting.

December 10, 2008

DATE



Ian A. Bowles, Secretary

Comments Received:

12/12/08 Department of Environmental Protection, Southeast Regional Office

IAB/AE/ac