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March 27, 2009

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

PROJECT NAME : Transportation Improvement Project – Route 181  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Belchertown  
PROJECT WATERSHED : Chicopee  
EEA NUMBER : 14374  
PROJECT PROPONENT : Massachusetts Highway Department,  
Town of Belchertown  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : February 25, 2009

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (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).

Project Description

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) and supplemental materials, the project consists of the reconstruction and rehabilitation of 5.65 miles of Route 181 (also known as South Main Street, Mill Valley Road, Franklin Street and Depot Street) in Belchertown. The purpose of the project is to improve travel conditions and safety in the corridor because the existing pavement is in poor condition and stormwater management infrastructure is substandard. Safety improvements to be constructed as part of this project include sight distance improvements, bicycle accommodation improvements, sidewalk reconstruction, roadway drainage improvements, guard rail installation and installation of

pavement markings and signage. Drainage improvements include new deep sump catch basins, infiltration basins, and water quality swales. The project will result in the alteration of 2,241 square feet (sf) of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands and 56,034 sf of Riverfront Area, the uniform widening of a roadway to a 30-foot wide cross-section, and the removal of 34 public shade trees.

### Jurisdiction and Permitting

The project is subject to review pursuant to Sections 11.03(3)(b)(1)(f), 11.03(6)(b)(1)(b), and 11.03(6)(b)(2)(b) of the MEPA regulations because it requires the alteration of one-half or more acres of other wetlands, the widening of an existing roadway by four or more feet for one-half or more miles and the cutting of five or more living public shade trees of 14 or more inches in diameter at breast height. The project will require an Order of Conditions from the Belchertown Conservation Commission; a Section 106 review under the National Historic Preservation Act from the Massachusetts Historical Commission; a Massachusetts Programmatic General Permit from the Army Corps of Engineers; a National Environmental Policy Act Categorical Exclusion from the Federal Highway Administration; and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit issued by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The project will be undertaken by and financed in part by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway), a State agency. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction for this project is broad and extends to all aspects of the project that are likely, directly or indirectly, to cause Damage to the Environment.

### Traffic and Transportation

The project will improve the travel conditions and safety of the deteriorating roadway. The project is not designed to increase roadway capacity, but to provide a consistent roadway cross-section and improve drainage, sight distances, and the service life of the roadway.

The project will include reconstructing Route 181 to a final lane configuration of two 11.5-foot travel lanes and two 3.5-foot shoulders to create a uniform 30-foot wide cross-section for the majority of the roadway. The project will require the removal of 34 public shade trees along the edge of the roadway to allow for widening or grading. MassHighway should work with the Town of Belchertown to mitigate the loss of these public shade trees.

### Wetlands

According to the ENF, the project will impact approximately 2,241 sf of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and 56,034 sf of Riverfront Area. The Proponent proposes to mitigate impacts to the BVW by creating a wetlands replication area. The Proponent should ensure their wetlands replication plan demonstrates compliance with the Massachusetts Inland Wetland Replication Guidelines.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (MassDEP) comment letter states that the project corridor appears to contain Inland Bank, BVW, Land Under Water Bodies and Waterways, Bordering Land Subject to Flooding, and Riverfront Area. The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) comment letter states the project involves activities within a 100-year floodplain and floodway. I refer the Proponent to DCR's comments for an overview of the pertinent regulations and requirements. I encourage the Proponent to work with MassDEP and DCR to ensure that wetlands impacts are avoided and minimized or that mitigation is provided.

In addition, MassDEP comments that the Jabish Brook is designated as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) and is located partially within the project bounds. The Proponent should review the 401 Water Quality Certificate regulations for applicability to work in or near an ORW. Furthermore, MassDEP comments that the project will traverse a Zone II Wellhead Protection Area and is the vicinity of two Interim Wellhead Protection Areas (IWPA's). I advise the Proponent to review MassDEP's comments regarding these sensitive areas to ensure the project will meet all required regulations.

### Stormwater

According to the ENF, the project will result in an increase of 4.7 acres of impervious surface area. The Proponent is subject to the Redevelopment Standard of the Stormwater Management Regulations (SMR) which requires a demonstration that the performance standards have been met to the maximum extent practicable.

According to the Proponent, the project's stormwater management plan will be designed to fully meet the SMR for a redevelopment project. The Proponent will need to work closely with MassDEP during final project design to ensure that the Proponent's stormwater management plan is consistent with MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy guidelines, and contains adequate stormwater pollution protection measures to prevent or minimize impacts to the ORW, floodplain, and other resource areas.

The stormwater runoff generated by the project will be mitigated by replacing the existing stormwater management infrastructure consisting of catch basins and drop inlets located within the project corridor with deep sump structures to conform to current Best Management Practices (BMPs) including the installation of new deep sump catch basins, infiltration basins, and water quality swales. The Proponent proposes the implementation of a new stormwater drainage system with a closed system with collection of pavement runoff in catch basins and drop inlets and discharged at natural watercourses. The roadway drainage system modifications will utilize infiltration systems and existing drainage outfalls.

I encourage MassHighway to use BMPs to minimize construction period erosion and sedimentation and to design the project to accommodate future stormwater mitigation measures if future work in wetland resource areas is required. The project will be required to prepare a

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) consistent with the NPDES Construction General Permit.

### Rare Species

According to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), portions of the proposed project are located within *Priority Habitat* and *Estimated Habitat* of Rare Species as indicated in the 13<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas. The NHESP identified in its comment letter that the following state-listed species is within or in the immediate vicinity of the project site: Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*). This species is protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) (M.G.L. c.131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.00). The NHESP has indicated that they anticipate being able to address any state-listed species concerns through the MESA review process.

I refer the Proponent to NHESP's comments with regard to fisheries resources within the vicinity of the proposed project and encourage the Proponent to use BMPs to minimize erosion and sedimentation impacts to these resources.

### Historic Resources

The northerly project limits on Route 181 pass through the Belchertown Center Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the project route passes by the Clapp Memorial Library which is also listed on the National Register, as well as a number of properties that are included in the Inventory of Historic and Archeological Assets of the Commonwealth. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) determined that the proposed project will have no adverse effect on significant historic or archaeological properties.

### Construction Period Impacts

I strongly encourage the Proponent to utilize BMPs during the construction period to limit impact to wetland resource areas, habitat, and rare species. The Proponent should evaluate construction period impacts, including erosion and sedimentation, air quality and solid waste disposal and commit to measures to minimize construction impacts. MassDEP has noted that demolition and construction activities must comply with both MassDEP Solid Waste and Air Quality control regulations. I advise the Proponent to carefully review MassDEP's comments and commit to ensure that the project is consistent with the applicable Solid Waste and Air Quality control regulations.

MassDEP has recommended that the Proponent retain a Licensed Site Professional (LSP) to review MassDEP's oil and/or hazardous material disposal site list and associated files prior to start-up of the project, in order to determine contaminated areas that could pose a problem with onsite excavation activities. The Proponent is advised that if soil and/or groundwater

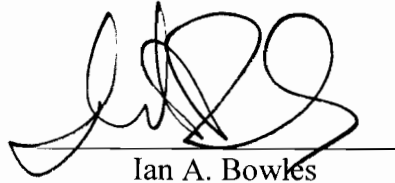
contamination is encountered during construction activities, a LSP will be needed to manage the contaminated materials in compliance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP).

### Conclusion

Based on the information in the ENF and after consultation with relevant public agencies, I find that no further MEPA review is required at this time. The project may proceed to state permitting.

March 27, 2009

Date



Ian A. Bowles

### Comments received:

03/13/2009	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
03/16/2009	Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
03/16/2009	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (WERO)
03/18/2009	Department of Conservation and Recreation
03/19/2009	Massachusetts Historical Commission
03/20/2009	Town of Belchertown Conservation Commission

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