



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

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August 9, 2006

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
ON THE  
6<sup>th</sup> NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

PROJECT NAME: : The Pinehills  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Plymouth  
PROJECT WATERSHED : South Coastal  
EOEA NUMBER : 11519  
PROJECT PROPONENT : Pine Hills LLC  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : July 10, 2006

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M.G.L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.00) of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I have reviewed this sixth Notice of Project Change (NPC 6) submitted on this project and have determined that it **does not require** further environmental review.

As described in this sixth NPC, the project change involves the construction of a separate common area irrigation system for 10' wide strips of landscaped area (approximately 69 acres total) located along each side of main collector roads, cul-de-sacs and neighborhood entranceways throughout the Pine Hills project area. The proposed common area irrigation system does not appear to cause a significant change to the project's overall environmental impacts. The NPC, however, correctly indicates that the changes necessitate modifications of the project's Water Management Act permit.

### **Background:**

In September 2004 the proponent submitted to the MEPA Office for review a fifth Phase Review Document (Phase 5 PRD) that resulted in the expansion of the Pinehills Master Development Plan to include approximately 3,174 acres for development.

A Secretary's Certificate was issued in October 2004 and found that the PRD 5 submittal adequately and properly complied with MEPA policy and regulations. To date, a total of 2,835 acres of proposed Pinehills development activity has been reviewed by the MEPA Office. Accordingly, I anticipate receiving subsequent phased review document submittals corresponding to the proponent's proposed development of the remaining 339 acres of developable land area located within the Pinehills project site.

The proponent provided an Infrastructure Plan (IP) with the first Phase Review Document (PRD-I) submittal to MEPA in October 1998 that included future build-out projections for potable water supply demand including Residential Use ( 115.67 MGY), Commercial Use ( 51.56 MGY gpd) , and Irrigation Use – four Golf Courses (64 MGY). According to the proponent, the Pine Hills Water Company currently serves the potable water demand for the commercial and residential components of the Pine Hills project from a 3-well wellfield located north of Clark Road and east of Old Sandwich Road.

Under an existing Water Management Act (WMA) permit issued by DEP in 2000, the Pine Hills Water Company is permitted to withdrawal a maximum daily rate of 1.4 mgd from all three wells combined with a total annual permitted volume of 167.9 MGY. As originally proposed, irrigation water for the first two of the four proposed golf courses will be supplied from stormwater runoff generated from within the Pine Hills project site, precipitation, and groundwater withdrawal from four irrigation wells, to man-made and lined storage ponds.

In 2000, the proponent was also issued a separate WMA permit to supply irrigation water (81.71 MGY for the 2 golf courses) from groundwater withdrawal to the storage ponds. In 2003, DEP issued a third WMA permit to the proponent to construct one additional well (47 MGY) to serve the irrigation needs associated with the third golf course constructed at the Pinehills. There are no currently no plans to build a fourth (as originally proposed) golf course. In 2004, DEP issued the proponent an Amendment to the 2000 WMA permit for potable water supply to add four additional separate wells, located southwest of Old Sandwich Road, for the irrigation of common area landscaping throughout the Pine Hills project site. [no increase in permit capacity – redirects 25 mgd from potable water to irrigation]

As described in this NPC submittal, the proponent was instructed by DEP to file a separate Water Management Act (WMA) permit application to consolidate the common area irrigation water supply needs (not including golf courses) for the Pine Hills project to include:

- the irrigation water supply volume (25 MGY) from the four irrigation wells permitted under the 2004 WMA Amendment,

- a 22 MGY increase (47 mgy total) in the permitted withdrawal of the 4 irrigation wells constructed under the 2004 Amendment., and
- an additional 22.6 MGY water withdrawal volume associated with approximately 25-35 small volume irrigation wells dispersed through the community for common area irrigation.

At full-build out, the estimated total annual common areas irrigation withdrawal volume for the Pine Hills development project is approximately 69.6 million gallons per year (mgy). The estimated total annual irrigation withdrawal volume for the three Pine Hills project golf courses is approximately 128.71MGY.

#### **Water Conservation:**

A number of comments have been received expressing concern for the potential impacts of the proponent's irrigation plan on groundwater and surface water resources located within and adjacent to the project area. I anticipate that DEP's permit review process will address the comments received pertaining to the potential hydrological impacts of the proponent's proposed water supply irrigation plan on surface water and groundwater resources located within the Eel River watershed and the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer.

The proponent will need to demonstrate to DEP that the proposed irrigation plan meets the Commonwealth's water conservation standards. I strongly encourage the proponent to incorporate irrigation water conservation and water use efficiency in the project design. Specifically, I ask that the proponent consider implementing a Irrigation Management Plan (IMP) to further reduce the project's irrigation water demand. An IMP could involve the use of amended soils and compost, the planting of native and drought-tolerant species of trees, shrubs, and turf grasses, an automated water efficient irrigation system, and a water management protocol for drought conditions. I ask that the proponent consult with DEP, and refer to the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission's *Lawn and Landscape Water Conservation, An Addendum to the Water Conservation Standards for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, October 2002*, during the final design of the proponent's IMP.

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I have reviewed the NPC 6 submittal and find that the changes described do not significantly increase the environmental impacts that are likely to result from the project. Based on a review of the information provided by the proponent and others, and consultation with relevant public agencies, I find that the potential impacts of the project are not significant enough to warrant preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and can be addressed in the state and local permitting processes. No further MEPA review is required.

August 9, 2006

DATE



Stephen R. Pritchard, Secretary

Comments received:

06/12/06	Division Of Marine Fisheries
07/31/06	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection – SERO
08/02/06	Old Colony Planning Council
08/03/06	Eel River Watershed Association, Ltd.

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