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September 5, 2008

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

PROJECT NAME : Reclamation and Reconstruction of Route 62 (Old Boston Turnpike)  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Hubbardston  
PROJECT WATERSHED : Ware River  
EEA NUMBER : 14288  
PROJECT PROPONENT : Massachusetts Highway Department  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : July 23, 2008

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.03 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).

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) and supplemental materials, the project consists of the full-depth reconstruction or reclamation of a 4.1-mile segment of Route 62 (Old Boston Turnpike) in Hubbardston. 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. The project will include adjusting the horizontal alignment as necessary within the existing highway layout to create a uniform 26-foot-wide cross-section for the entire length of the roadway. New steel beam guardrails will be installed, stonewalls will be reset behind the highway layout line as necessary, and existing asphalt driveway aprons will be reconstructed.

The project will also include geometric improvements at the four-way intersection of Routes 62 and 68, at the T-intersection of Route 62 and Twin Hill Road, and pavement marking improvements at the four-way intersection of Route 62 and Barre Road. The ENF has noted that the major improvements to Bridge H-24-201, which carries Route 62 over the Ware River, are not included as part of this ENF. Drainage improvements include the repair and/or replacement of existing catch basins, repair or extension of existing cross culverts, and construction of new vegetated swales along the roadside, where the proposed work is located outside of regulated wetland resource areas. The project will require clearing and thinning of roadside vegetation and removal of 100 or less trees within the roadway layout. Trees to be removed have been identified in the ENF as either obstructing vehicle operators' line of sight, posing as an impact hazard and/or contributing to a significant canopy in areas where icing conditions exist.

The project is undergoing review pursuant to Section 11.03(6)(b)(2)(b) because it will receive State funding and will result in the cutting of five or more living public shade trees of 14 or more inches in diameter at breast height. The project will be required to submit a complete application of BRP WM 09 – Approval of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans for Construction of Industrial General Permits Discharging to Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) – to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The project will require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit issued by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). The project has received a Negative Determination of Applicability from the Hubbardston Conservation Commission.

The project will be undertaken by and financed in part by 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/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 intersection geometry. MassHighway has proposed several design exceptions along the project length to limit overall environmental impacts. Stone walls located within the highway layout will be reset behind the layout line as necessary. Several new, dry-laid stone retaining walls will also be constructed along the roadway to facilitate grade changes.

The project will require the removal of extensive areas of woody vegetation along the edge of the roadway to allow for widening or grading. The majority of the corridor is bordered by thick, mature vegetation. The project includes the removal of less than 100 public shade trees (estimated between 60 and 70 trees). I encourage the MassHighway to work with the Town of Hubbardston to mitigate the loss of these public shade trees.

Wetlands

The supplemental ENF materials proposed the removal of all work from wetland resource areas regulated under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. MassHighway has worked with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Office of Watershed Management to obtain temporary and permanent slope and drainage easements to facilitate the project. No alteration of wetland resource areas is anticipated.

Stormwater

Due to the project scope revisions eliminating proposed culvert extension, headwalls, etc., in wetland resource areas and the Negative Determination of Applicability issued by the Hubbardston Conservation Commission, MassDEP's Stormwater Regulations do not apply to this project. However, I encourage MassHighway to use Best Management Practices (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 and MassDEP requirements for discharging to ORWs.

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 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas. The NHESP identified in its comment letter that the following state-listed species within or in the immediate vicinity of the project site: American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*), Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina*), and Bartram's Shadbush (*Amelanchier bartramiana*). These species are protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA)(M.G.L. c.131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.00). Certain aspects of this project may be exempt from MESA review. The NHESP has indicated that they anticipate being able to address any state-listed species concerns through the MESA review process.

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 with obtaining required State permits. I remind MassHighway that a Notice of Project Change (NPC) may be required if additional drainage work (culvert extensions, headwall construction, etc.) is undertaken in the future. MassHighway should consult with the MEPA Office to determine if an NPC should be filed upon determining the scope of additional drainage improvements that may be proposed in the future.

September 5, 2008

Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

- 08/05/2008 Department of Conservation and Recreation – Flood Hazard Management Program
- 08/08/2008 Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife – Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)
- 08/11/2008 Hubbardston Office of the Town Administrator
- 08/11/2008 Department of Conservation and Recreation – Office of Watershed Management
- 08/12/2008 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection – CERO (as amended by emails dated 08/27/2008)
- 08/25/2008 Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife – Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) – 2<sup>nd</sup> letter

IAB/HSJ/hsj