

Czepiga, Page (EEA)

From: Paulson, David (FWE)
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2015 1:58 PM
To: Czepiga, Page (EEA); Glorioso, Lauren (FWE)
Subject: I-90/I-495 Interchange Improvement Project ENF (15334/14-33929)

March 18, 2015

Secretary Matthew Beaton
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Attention: MEPA Office
Page Czepiga, EEA No. 15334
100 Cambridge St. Suite 900
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Project Name: I-90/I-495 Interchange Improvement Project
Proponent: MassDOT Highway Division
Location: Hopkinton/Westborough/Southborough
Document Reviewed: Environmental Notification Form
EEA No.: 15334
NHESP No: 14-33929

Dear Secretary Beaton:

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (the "Division") has reviewed the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the proposed "*I-90/I-495 Interchange Improvement Project*" and would like to offer the following comments regarding state-listed rare species and their habitats.

The project site is mapped as Priority and Estimated Habitat for State-listed rare species therefore, the above reference project will need to file project pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA 321 CMR 10.00). At present, the materials provided in the *ENF* does not provide sufficient detail to allow site-specific review of proposed work within *Priority Habitat* or any potential impacts to state-listed species.

The Division recommends that the Proponent avoids and minimizes impacts to state-listed species and their habitat to the greatest extent practicable. Specifically, Alternative 14-5 has the least amount of impact to Priority Habitat without proposing new disturbance within undeveloped habitat for state-listed species (i.e. 22-3's proposed ramp). Similar to what is proposed in Alternative 22-3, Alternative 14-5 has the potential to restore habitat adjacent to the Cedar Swamp ACEC (i.e. removing the existing loop road and pavement). We would encourage the Applicant to develop a restoration plan that improves state-listed species habitat as well as the Atlantic White Cedar wetland type. Please note that our consultation is ongoing and look forward to reviewing the formal MESA filing with more detailed site plans.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact David Paulson, Endangered Species Review Biologist, at (508) 389-6366 or david.paulson@state.ma.us.

David Paulson, M.S.
Endangered Species Review Biologist

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