

## Final Environmental Impact Statement / Final Environmental Impact Report

### South Coast Rail Project

Bristol, Plymouth, Norfolk and Suffolk Counties  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of the Army Permit Application Number NAE-2007-00698  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs EEA No. 14346

Lead Federal Agency: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory Division  
696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751

Cooperating Agencies: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Federal Transit Administration  
Federal Highway Administration  
Federal Railroad Administration

**Abstract:** This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was prepared pursuant to section 102(2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulations (Appendix B to 33 CFR part 325). This FEIS was prepared to assist in review of a Department of the Army Permit application submitted on May 8, 2008 by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works (currently known as the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, or MassDOT) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and potentially Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. The permit application was submitted for the discharge of fill material into waters of the United States (U.S.), ranging in area from less than eleven acres to approximately twenty-one acres (depending on the alternative selected), including wetlands, incidental to the construction of new public passenger rail (or other public transportation) facilities connecting the terminal stations of Fall River and New Bedford with South Station in Boston, Massachusetts (the Project). A "Notice of Intent" to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on this permit application was published in the Federal Register on October 31, 2008.<sup>1</sup> Notices of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) were published in the Federal Register on March 25, 2011,<sup>2</sup> and April 1, 2011.<sup>3</sup>

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) considered several transportation facilities and corridor alternatives to implement the proposed transit service over a distance of approximately 50 to 60 miles. Transportation modes considered included rail (diesel or electric) and rapid bus. Corridors considered included a rail corridor through Attleboro, Stoughton or Middleborough or a rapid bus service along the Route 24 corridor. MassDOT's preferred alternative is the Stoughton commuter rail alternative (using electric or diesel powered locomotives) which involves using the active freight rail lines from New Bedford and Fall River to Taunton, then using the inactive rail bed north to Stoughton, then using the active commuter rail tracks to South Station in Boston.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Register 73:212, 64927-64928 (October 31, 2008)

<sup>2</sup> Federal Register 76:58, 16737 -16739 (March 25, 2011)

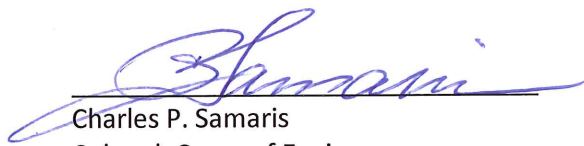
<sup>3</sup> Federal Register 76:63, 18218 (April 1, 2011; EIS No. 20110095)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined that there is no practicable alternative to the Stoughton Electric alternative which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, and also does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences.

This document was prepared with the intent to serve as a Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and NEPA document to comply with the procedural requirements of both state and federal law and serve as a combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). The State's environmental review pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-621) and the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00) is being conducted simultaneously with the NEPA process.

This FEIS/FEIR compares the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the alternatives on the natural, cultural and socioeconomic environment, including vernal pools and other wetlands; cultural resources; threatened and endangered species; transportation; air quality, including greenhouse gas emissions; noise and vibration; surface water and groundwater; hydrology and water quality; and socioeconomic effects. Mitigation is proposed to offset or reduce the unavoidable impacts of the alternatives. The FEIS/FEIR also provides responses to the public and agency comments received on the DEIS/DEIR, updated technical analyses conducted subsequent to the DEIS/DEIR, and the compliance of the alternatives with various state and federal environmental regulations.

A public notice announcing the availability of this document will be published concurrently with an announcement in the Federal Register. Copies of this FEIS/FEIR are available at repositories that are listed on the public notice. Under NEPA regulations, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must wait a minimum of 30 days following release of this FEIS/FEIR before it can complete its Record of Decision (ROD) on the applicant's proposed action. The ROD on whether to issue or deny a Department of the Army permit will likely take several months to complete after the FEIS.

  
Charles P. Samaris  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
District Engineer

29 Aug 13  
Date

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