



# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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## Corps in New England negotiating with Mass DOT to accept funds to expedite processing of permit applications

**CONCORD, Mass.** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District is negotiating an agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to accept funds in order to expedite the processing of MassDOT Department of Army permit applications.

The proposed agreement would be to expedite Corps review of permit applications submitted by MassDOT pursuant to the Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates the discharge or fill of material in United States waters, including wetlands, and with Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, which provides for federal regulation of any work in, or affecting navigable waters of the United States.

MassDOT has realized a substantial increase in its highway and bridge construction projects over the last several years and state officials have called on MassDOT to accelerate the design, construction and repair of Massachusetts' highways and bridges. Many of these projects fall within Corps jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. Accelerated review and authorization is critical to MassDOT's ability to advertise these projects so as to meet scheduled dates for obligating federal funding, statewide Transportation Improvement Program targets and accelerated programs. With this funding the Corps will be able to provide MassDOT with dedicated staff to ensure priority review, consistency and opportunity for staff training and process improvements.

Permit application review activities would include, but not be limited to: application completeness review; jurisdictional determinations; site visits; preparation of public notices; public hearings; preparation of correspondence; interagency coordination; meetings (with non-Federal entity, applicants, agencies and general public); coordination concerning endangered species and cultural resources; public interest review; analysis of alternatives; compensatory mitigation proposal reviews; and preparation of environmental assessments and permit decision documents.

The Corps' Regulatory Program is funded as a congressionally appropriated line item in the annual Federal budget. Additional funds received by the District from a non-federal public entity would be used to augment the District Regulatory budget, in accordance with the provisions of Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000. With the supplemental funding, the District would retain a term employee or advertise for additional permanent staff and pay for support services, both technical and administrative.

The expedited review of the non-federal permit applications is not expected to increase the time for permit evaluations of other projects as there will be no decrease in the permanent staffing level of non-funded reviews.

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## **Corps negotiating with Mass DOT to accept funds to expedite permit reviews/2-2-2-2-2**

The public notice on this proposal with more information is available for review at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select Regulatory/Permitting or go to the link to Massachusetts notices at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Regulatory/Public%20Notices/pubnot4.asp?mystate=MA>.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, state and local agencies and officials, and other interested parties. Comments will be made part of the record, and they will be considered in determining whether it would be in the public interest to proceed with this action. If the District Commander determines, after considering public comments, that the acceptance and expenditure of the funds is in compliance with Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000 and is not otherwise contrary to the general public interest, the District will implement Section 214 of WRDA 2000 through a signed Memorandum of Agreement and accept funds from MassDOT. A second public notice will be issued regarding the final decision on this matter.

Public comments on this proposal should be forwarded no later than Jan. 31, 2012 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory Division (ATTN: Karen Adams), 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751. Additional information is available from Permit Project Manager Karen Adams at 978-318-8828 or toll free 800-343-4789 or 800-362-4367 (if calling from within Massachusetts) or by email to: [karen.k.adams@usace.army.mil](mailto:karen.k.adams@usace.army.mil).

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