

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Draft 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 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) 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 DEIS 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>

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) (formerly the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works) is considering several transportation facilities and corridor alternatives to implement the proposed transit service over a distance of approximately 50 to 60 miles. Transportation modes under consideration include rail (diesel or electric) and rapid bus. Corridors under consideration include a rail corridor through Attleboro, Stoughton or Middleborough or a rapid bus service along the Route 24 corridor.

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 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The State's environmental review Pursuant to the

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

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 DEIR/DEIS 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.

A public notice announcing the availability of this document will be published concurrently with an announcement of its availability, comment period and deadline, and public hearing dates and locations in the Federal Register. Copies of this DEIS/DEIR are available at repositories that are listed on the public notice. Public Hearings will be held in the vicinity of the project where members of the public will have an opportunity to provide comments. Comments on the document may be submitted in writing or may be made orally at the public hearings. Written comments on this DEIS/DEIR must be received by the date specified in the Public Notice, and may be submitted via hand delivery, mail or e-mail to the contacts below.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District**

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