



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
New England District

696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Public Notice

In Reply Refer to: Ms. Erika Mark
nae-pn-cw@usace.army.mil
Programs & Project
Management Division

Date: **November 2, 2020**

Comment Period Closes: **December 2, 2020**

30-DAY PUBLIC NOTICE

INDIA POINT RAILROAD BRIDGE DEMOLITION PROJECT EAST PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District, plans to perform work in the navigable waters of this District, subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order 11988. The work involves demolition of the remainder of the India Point Bridge and associated fender system from the Seekonk River in East Providence, Rhode Island. The Congress of the United States, in Section 1166 (c) of the 1986 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA-86) (Public Law 99-662), declared the India Point Railroad Bridge to be a hazard to navigation and authorized the Secretary of the Army to demolish and remove the bridge. Attachment 1 lists pertinent laws, regulations, and directives.

Project Description: The India Point Railroad Bridge was constructed by the Boston Bridge Works in 1902. Once completed, the bridge connected the city of Providence, Rhode Island with the city of East Providence. The India Point Railroad Bridge was a double-tracked center bearing swing-bridge located on the Seekonk River. It consisted of two end-to-end steel Baltimore through trusses riveted together joined by a central tower, resting on a central granite pier. The swing bridge was approximately 223 feet long by 29 feet wide (inside width) by 35 feet high and was protected by a wooden timber fender system.

The bridge was officially abandoned for rail traffic by the New Haven Railroad in 1974 and subsequently sold to the city of Providence when the city purchased the Fox Point freight yard (now India Point Park). In 1990, the U.S. Coast Guard determined that the defunct bridge was a hazard to navigation. The Congress of the United States authorized the removal of the bridge in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-662). The swing portion of the bridge, along with ancillary works, supporting structures, related sub-aquatic works, and all bridge debris, were removed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2002.

The proposed project will remove the remaining elements, two fixed bridge trusses, and associated fender system, of the India Point Railroad Bridge.

Purpose of Work: The purpose of the project is to remove a navigational hazard from the Seekonk River. If the bridge remains in its current position, it would continue to deteriorate, increasing the risk of the bridge's collapse and worsening the hazard associated with its presence in this section of the river.

Alternatives: The following options were considered as part of the alternative analysis process.

The Preferred Alternative includes the demolition of the remaining elements of the India Point Bridge. This includes the following actions:

- Dismantling of the remaining bridge superstructure (i.e. features above the water's surface);
- Removal of all substructure features (i.e. features below the water's surface). These include the steel-clad concrete piers that will be removed to roughly 1-2 feet below the mud line. The granite block abutment at the east end of the bridge shall remain in place;
- Removal of the wooden fender system, which will be either pulled out completely or cut approximately two feet below the mud line. The wooden fenders likely contain creosote and would be disposed of at an appropriate, offsite facility; and
- Removal of any material that has fallen from the bridge and is located on the riverbed below the bridge.

The No Action Alternative would allow the bridge to remain in its current position, where it would remain a hazard to navigation. Deterioration would increase the risk of the bridge's collapse, which would further increase the hazard associated with its presence in this section of the river.

Additional Information: Additional information may be obtained by emailing Erika Mark, Project Manager, at nae-pn-cw@usace.army.mil.

Coordination: The proposed work has, or will be coordinated with the following agencies:

Federal:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Park Service
U.S. Coast Guard

State of Rhode Island:

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

Local:

City of East Providence

Environmental Impacts: An Environmental Assessment is available for review upon request. I have made a preliminary determination that an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed bridge demolition is not required under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This determination will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice.

Federal Consistency with the Rhode Island Coastal Zone Management Program: I find that the India Point Bridge demolition project is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the state of Rhode Island's coastal management program established as a result of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

Other Information:

a. Local Sponsor: None.

b. Endangered Species: It is our preliminary determination that the project is not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species. The USACE is in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed activity will not significantly affect any species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844).

c. Floodplain Management: In accordance with Executive Order 11988, USACE has determined that the proposed work will not contribute to negative impacts or damages caused by floods.

d. Cultural Resources: USACE believes there is no prudent or feasible alternative to demolition of the remaining two spans of the historic bridge. USACE and the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Officer (RI SHPO) have consulted, and concur that the demolition will have a conditional no adverse effect provided that the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation is completed prior to the start of work. The no adverse effect determination is conditioned on completion of the HAER documentation for the two remaining spans, in consultation with the National Park Service.

e. Essential Fish Habitat Assessment: The USACE has determined that the project may have a temporary adverse effect on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The project site is contained within areas designated as EFH as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 for federally-managed fish species. The USACE assessed the effects that the project is likely to have on EFH and determined that they will be short-term and localized and that there will be no significant impacts on the designated fisheries resources. The USACE is in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service to ensure that any potential impacts will be minimized.

f. Additional Requirements: The USACE has determined a 401 Water Quality Certificate from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management is not necessary because there will be no dredging or depositing of dredge material. USACE has requested a Coastal Zone Management Consistency Determination Concurrence from the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council.

Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you know to be interested in this project. Comments are invited from all interested parties and should be directed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751, ATTN: Erika Mark; or emailed to nae-pn-cw@usace.army.mil within 30 days of this notice.

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October 28, 2020
Date

John A. Atilano II
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Attachments

Attachment 1

PERTINENT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND DIRECTIVES

Clean Water Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4347)

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-667e)

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451)

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.)

Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)

Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.)

Estuary Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.)

Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460L-12 et seq.)

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, (54 U.S.C. 200301 et seq.)

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as amended by the
Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.)

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977 amended by EO 12148,
20 July 1979.

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority
Populations and Low-Income Populations, 11 February 1994

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Health Risks and Safety Risks,
21 April 1997

Attachment 2

India Point Railroad Bridge Demolition Project

