

14-5041-002
June 30, 2021

Secretary Kathleen A. Theoharides
Attn: MEPA Office
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: **Special Review Process Request (EEA #16398)**
Wheelwright Pond Dam Removal Project
Hardwick & New Braintree, Massachusetts

Dear Secretary Theoharides:

On behalf of Raitto Industrial Park (dam owner), East Quabbin Land Trust, and the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, Tighe & Bond is submitting this Special Review Procedure (SRP) Request for the Wheelwright Pond Dam Removal Project in the Towns of Hardwick and New Braintree, Massachusetts pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA; M.G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62I) and Section 11.09 (Special Review Procedures) of the MEPA regulations. This letter serves to clarify the SRP request initially described in Section 2.5.1 in the Wheelwright Pond Dam Removal Project Expanded Environmental Notification Form (EENF) submitted on June 15, 2021 (EEA #16398). The proposed project includes the removal of Wheelwright Pond Dam to address long term dam safety-related concerns and improve wildlife habitat.

The SRP request is solely for the MassCentral Rail Trail component of the project, which is anticipated to be Stage 4 of the overall project and is not expected to occur for several years. A new bridge crossing of Ware River to accommodate the future rail trail has been included in this EENF since its construction will overlap with work being performed to accommodate the dam removal. However, the alignment of the rail trail beyond the limits of the dam removal project are not known and thus are not included in the current MEPA filing. The future extension of the rail trail will likely utilize state financial assistance; however, the impacts relative to MEPA thresholds and timeline of implementation are unknown.

It is anticipated that, prior to commencement of the future extension of the rail trail in Hardwick and New Braintree beyond the limits shown in the EENF, a Notice of Project Change (NPC) will be submitted to MEPA. The NPC will describe the proposed rail trail and its environmental impacts, so the cumulative impacts of the project can be considered in relation to the MEPA thresholds.

Circulation Requirements

This SRP will be signed by the landowner and the land trust at the end of the MEPA process. The SRP request will be distributed to the distribution list associated with the EENF.



We look forward to discussing this project with you. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me by phone at (413) 237-7489 or by email at DRButtrick@tighebond.com.

Very truly yours,

TIGHE & BOND, INC.



Daniel R. Buttrick, PE
Senior Engineer

Copy: Kristopher M. Houle, PE, Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration