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January 30, 2009

Kristina Egan
South Coast Rail Manager
Executive Office of Transportation
Ten Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3969

Re: Request for Extension
South Coast Rail Project (EEA #14346)

Dear Ms. Egan:

I write on behalf of Secretary Ian A. Bowles in response to your letter dated January 29, 2009 requesting an extension of the time period for the Secretary's decision on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the South Coast Rail Project under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). In your letter you indicated that the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) intends to provide supplemental information concerning the project that was requested in public comments, including ridership projections. Based on a review of the public comments received on this project, I agree that the supplemental information, which will also be provided to the United States Army Corps of Engineers to aid in their review of the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), will assist in the Secretary's review of the project and I therefore grant the requested extension. I also find that the benefits provided by coordinating review of this project under both MEPA and NEPA warrant an extension beyond the usual time periods specified in the MEPA regulations if necessary.¹

As indicated in your letter, the supplemental information will be made publicly available. Specifically, the MEPA Office will publish notice of the availability of this information in *The Environmental Monitor* and will accept public comments for an additional 20 days following that publication, in conformance with the regulations.

¹ Under 301 CMR 11.06(3), extensions of the comment period for review of an ENF shall not ordinarily exceed 30 days. As noted above, I find that the extension being granted to this project, which is of unusual scope and significance to the Commonwealth, is warranted and may exceed 30 days if necessary.

I encourage EOT to continue to coordinate closely with the MEPA Office and the Army Corps of Engineers as it prepares to submit the supplemental information in order to ensure the coordinated, efficient and transparent review of the environmental impacts of this project under the respective state and federal processes.

Sincerely,



Alicia McDevitt
Assistant Secretary

Cc: Alan Anacheka-Nasemann, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers