



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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Jack Buckley, *Director*

June 29, 2017

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Attention: MEPA Office
Page Czepiga, EEA No. 15703
100 Cambridge St.
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Project Name: *Sudbury-Hudson Transmission Reliability Project*
Proponent: *NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy*
Location: *Ludlow, Wilbraham, & Hampden, MA*
Document Reviewed: *Environmental Notification Form (ENF)*
Project Description: *Construction of underground transmission line*
EEA No.: *15703*
NHESP Tracking No. *15-34327*

Dear Secretary Beaton:

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (Division) has reviewed the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the *Sudbury-Hudson Transmission Reliability Project* and would like to offer the following comments.

Portions of the proposed project are located within *Priority Habitat* and *Estimated Habitat* as indicated in the 13th Edition of the *MA Natural Heritage Atlas* and therefore it requires review through a direct filing with Division for compliance with the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA, MGL c.131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.00). Review of the NHESP database indicates that the proposed project will occur within the habitat of multiple animal species which are state-listed and protected in accordance with the MESA.

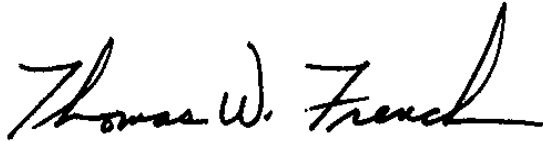
In anticipation of filing the proposed project for compliance with MESA, the project proponent initiated consultation with the Division on potential rare species concerns associated with the proposed work. The Division requires additional information to determine the extent of impacts to rare species and their habitats, including but not limited to, site-specific assessments of habitat quality and existing conditions and alternative analyses for impact minimization and avoidance. Finally, as described in the ENF, there may be future projects within the ROW (e.g. Mass Central Rail Trail). The Division is concerned that these additional projects could lead to cumulative impacts to rare species and their habitats and pursuant to the MESA Regulations they should be reviewed in their entirety.

The Division will not render a final decision until the MEPA review process and associated public and agency comment period is completed, and until all required MESA filing materials are submitted by the proponent to the Division. As our MESA review is ongoing, no alteration to the soil, surface, or vegetation and no work associated with the proposed project shall occur until the Division has made a

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final determination. We look forward to continued careful coordination with the proponent on the details of the project design and implementation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Eve Schlüter, Ph.D., Chief of Regulatory Review at (508) 389-6346 or eve.schluter@state.ma.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas W. French". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Thomas W. French, Ph.D.
Assistant Director

cc: Vivian Kimball, VHB
Hudson Board of Selectmen
Hudson Conservation Commission
Hudson Planning Department
Sudbury Board of Selectmen
Sudbury Conservation Commission
Sudbury Planning Department
DEP Central Regional Office, MEPA Coordinator
DEP Northeastern Regional Office, MEPA Coordinator