

## **Overview of MEPA Review Process**

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EEA# 16046

### **Q: What is the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)?**

**A:** The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office is part of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts led by Secretary Kathleen Theoharides. MEPA requires that State Agencies study the environmental consequences of their actions and that they take all feasible measures to avoid or minimize and mitigate Damage to the Environment, as defined by the MEPA regulations.

MEPA review is not a permitting process and does not result in the approval or denial of a project. MEPA does not pass judgment on whether a project is environmentally beneficial, or whether a project can or should receive a particular permit. MEPA requires public study, disclosure, and development of feasible mitigation for a proposed project.

### **Q: When is MEPA review required?**

**A:** MEPA review is required if a project meets or exceeds a MEPA review threshold (301 CMR 11.03), *and* requires a State Agency Action. State Agency Actions include a project proposed by a state Agency, the granting of state Permits or licenses, provision of state Financial Assistance, or transfer of state-owned land. MEPA review is required only if both conditions are satisfied.

### **Q: Why does this project require MEPA review?**

**A:** The project requires MEPA review because it requires a Chapter 91 License and potential Superseding Order of Conditions from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and it exceeds the review thresholds at 301 CMR 11.03(3)(b)(6) *Construction, reconstruction or Expansion of an existing solid fill structure of 1,000 or more sf base area...provided the structure occupies flowed tidelands and 11.03(3)(b)(1)(a) alteration of coastal bank*. If the Massachusetts Historical Commission determines the project will have an Adverse Effect, the project will also exceed the threshold at 11.03(10)(b)(1) *demolition of all or any exterior part of any Historic Structure listed in or located in any Historic District listed in the State Register of Historic Places or Inventory of Historic and Archaeological assets of the Commonwealth*.

### **Q: What is the purpose of the MEPA meeting?**

**A:** The purpose of the meeting is for the MEPA Environmental Analyst, State Agency Officials, and the public to learn about the project, existing conditions, what is proposed, potential impacts, measures that have been taken to avoid or minimize impacts, and potential mitigation measures.

There will be time allocated for questions and clarifications from members of the public. **The formal method of participation in the MEPA process is through the submittal of written comments.**

**Q: How do I submit comments / participate in the MEPA process?**

**A:** Anyone may provide written comments on the project, its alternatives, its potential environmental impacts, mitigation measures and specific analysis that should be required if the Secretary requires a discretionary EIR. **Comments must be submitted in writing on or before July 1<sup>st</sup> (unless extended).**

The MEPA Office encourages submitting comments through the MEPA public comment portal:

<https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/EEA/PublicComment/Landing/>

Comment letters can be emailed directly to [erin.flaherty@mass.gov](mailto:erin.flaherty@mass.gov)

Comments may also be submitted by mail or by hand delivery:

Secretary Theoharides  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
Attn: MEPA Office  
*Erin Flaherty EEA No. 16046*  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

Please note that comments submitted on MEPA documents are public records. **Comments only need to be submitted once - do *not* provide both an electronic copy and signed hard copy).**

**Q: Who can I contact with questions about the MEPA Process?**

**A:** Questions on the MEPA Process may be answered by contacting Erin Flaherty, MEPA Analyst at [erin.flaherty@mass.gov](mailto:erin.flaherty@mass.gov) or 617-626-1128.