



David E. Pierce, Ph.D.
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

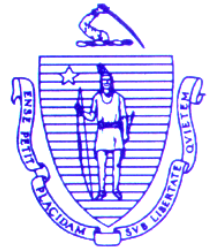
Division of Marine Fisheries

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March 23, 2018

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
Attn: MEPA Office
Purvi Patel, EEA No. 14346
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Secretary Beaton:

The Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) has reviewed the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) for Phase 1 of the South Coast Rail Project. Phase 1 will connect the cities of Fall River and New Bedford to Boston using the Middleborough Secondary to connect with the existing Middleborough Lakeville commuter rail line. Existing marine fisheries resources and potential project impacts are outlined in the following paragraphs.

The Phase 1 line of the South Coast Rail Project includes culverts and bridges over waterways that support a variety of diadromous fish species (Table 1). Within the Fall River Extension, the Taunton River contains river herring (alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) and blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*), white perch (*Morone americana*), Atlantic tomcod (*Microgadus tomcod*), and Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*). The Assonet River supports alewife, blueback herring, American eel, and white perch while Rattlesnake Brook, Poquoy Brook, and Furnace Brook all support river herring and American eel. The Cotley River also contains American eel. Within the New Bedford Extension, the Acushnet River and Fall Brook both contain river herring, American eel, and white perch, while the Acushnet River also contains rainbow smelt.

MA DMF offers the following comments for your consideration:

- Avoidance of in-water work during spring diadromous fish migration and juvenile river herring fall emigrations is the preferred approach to minimizing impacts to these resources. A summary table outlining water crossings, existing diadromous fish species, and recommended time of year (TOY) avoidance periods is provided below (Table 1).
- In-water work may proceed within the TOY restriction periods outlined in Table 1 if conducted behind cofferdams and cofferdam installation and removal can be staged to occur outside of the site TOY period(s).
- Stream flow should be maintained during all in-water work to maintain habitat connectivity and fish passage. A gravity-fed water control device is recommended over bypass pumps and other alternatives.

Table 1. Diadromous fish resources in the Phase 1 project area and recommended time of year (TOY) restrictions on in-water work. Silt control recommendations are also included in the “Recommended TOYs” column for cases where additional containment is deemed necessary for out-of-water work.

Fall River Extension			
Station	Stream	Species Present	Recommended TOYs
CV-LK-11	Poquoy Brook	RH, eel	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
CV-LK-12	Poquoy Brook	RH, eel	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
CV-BK-1	Cotley River	eel	3/15 – 6/30
CV-BK-2	Cotley River	eel	3/15 – 6/30
Cotley R. Bridge North	Cotley River	eel	3/15 – 6/30 (in-river), Silt controls
Cotley R. Bridge South	Cotley River	eel	3/15 – 6/30 (in-river), Silt controls
Assonet R. Bridge	Assonet River	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15 (in-river), Silt controls
CV-FRN-16	Assonet River (Forge Pond)	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
CV-FRN-17	Assonet River (Forge Pond)	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
CV-FRN-18	Assonet River (Forge Pond)	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
CV-FRN-20	Assonet River	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
CV-FRN-22	Terry Brook (Rattlesnake Brook)	RH, eel	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
Weaver’s Cove Layover	Taunton River	RH,eel,AS,RS, WP,AT,AST	NO TOY – Silt controls
Fall River Depot	Taunton River	RH,eel,AS,RS, WP,AT,AST	NO TOY – Silt controls
Battleship Cove	Taunton River	RH,eel,AS,RS, WP,AT,AST	NO TOY – Silt controls
New Bedford Extension			
Station	Stream	Species	Recommended TOYs
CV-LK-7	Fall Brook	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
CV-FRN-1	Fall Brook	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
CV-FRN-3	Fall Brook	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
Fall Brook Bridge	Fall Brook	RH, eel, WP	3/15 – 6/30, 9/1– 11/15
Whale’s Tooth	Acushnet River	RH, eel, RS, WP	NO TOY – Silt controls

Species Codes: AS (American shad), AST (Atlantic sturgeon), AT (Atlantic tomcod), eel (American eel), RH (river herring – alewife and blueback herring), WP (white perch)

Questions regarding this review may be directed to John Logan in our New Bedford office at (508) 990-2860 ext. 141.

Sincerely,



David E. Pierce, Ph.D.
Director

cc: Jean Fox, MassDOT
Middleborough, Lakeville, Taunton, Raynham, Berkley, Freetown, New Bedford, and Fall River
Conservation Commissions
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