



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

*Executive Office of Energy and
Environmental Affairs*

Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
MEPA 101 and Public Participation
January 28, 2024



Overview

- **MEPA Program**
- **When is MEPA Review Required?**
- **What Happens During MEPA Review?**
- **How to Participate in MEPA Process**
- **How to Contact MEPA**

MEPA Program

Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

- Modeled on federal program (called “NEPA”)
- About 16 states have similar programs

Key principles

- Conduct environmental review before project is approved
- MEPA review is broad
- Public participation is important





Purpose of MEPA

- **MEPA: Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act**
 - M.G.L. c. 30, s. 61 to 62L; 301 CMR 11.00 (regulations)
- **Purpose is to study environmental impacts of projects**
 - Project must make best efforts to avoid or minimize environmental harm
- **Environmental justice (EJ) principles apply**
 - Any project near EJ communities must submit environmental impact report (EIR), if it is required to go through MEPA process (see next slide)
 - Must address any identified harms to EJ communities
- **MEPA does not directly approve/deny projects**



When Is MEPA Review Required?

(1) First, the project must require “action” from an agency:

- If project is directly proposed by agency (mostly state agencies)
- If project **requires permit/approval** from agency
- If project requires funding or land/easement from agency

(2) Second, the project must involve a MEPA “review threshold”:

- Land, Rare Species, Wetlands, Water, Wastewater, Transportation, Energy, Air, Solid/Hazardous Waste, Historical/Archeological Resources, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)



What Happens During MEPA Review?

(1) “ENF” review (Environmental Notification Form)

- Project files an initial filing with MEPA Office (called “ENF” form).
- ENF is published in Environmental Monitor (twice/month; see next slide).
- Public comments are taken for 20 days, and decision issued wi/ 10 days.
The decision provides guidance on what to include in the EIR.

(2) “EIR” review (Environmental Impact Report)

- Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is filed with MEPA Office.
 - EIR is published in Environmental Monitor (twice/month).
 - Public comments are taken for 30 days, and decision issued wi/ 7 days. The decision could state that EIR is adequate, or, if not, require more EIRs.
- ** As of Jan. 1, 2022, all projects near EJ communities must complete both steps above, if the project is required to go through MEPA review.



How to Participate in MEPA Review

- 1. Check the Environmental Monitor for project filings.**
- 2. Attend the MEPA site visit or remote consultation session.**
- 3. Submit written comment letters on the project filing.**
- 4. Reach out to the MEPA Office or assigned analyst (listed in the Environmental Monitor).**
- 5. Reach out to the proponent contact (listed in the Environmental Monitor).**
- 6. Reach out to local organizations active in your area (MEPA and EEA EJ office keep a list).**



Environmental Monitor

- **Notice of all project filings are published in the Environmental Monitor**
 - <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/EEA/MEPA-eMonitor/home>
- **Published twice a month (typically, 10th and 20th of month)**
- **Public comment period begins once a project is published, and a MEPA analyst is assigned**
- **Anyone can sign up to be notified each time the Environmental Monitor is published**
 - Email MEPA@mass.gov or follow directions indicated in later slides



MEPA Site Visit / Remote Consultation Session

- **Notice of site visit or remote consultation is published in the Environmental Monitor.**
- **This is an opportunity to ask questions or share thoughts on project; however, only written comments will be attached to the MEPA decision.**
- **If oral language interpretation is needed, the notice will contain instructions on how to request it. In some cases, interpreters will be present at the site visit.**



How to Submit Written Comments

- **Email the comment to the MEPA Analyst (listed in the Environmental Monitor), or use the MEPA Public Comment Portal:**
 - <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/submitting-comments>
- **Comment letters should focus on:**
 - Environmental impacts and suggestions for how to address
 - Suggestions for how the project could be improved
 - Whether the project has conducted outreach in your area
- **If you provide written comments on the initial project filing (the “ENF”), you will be notified when the environmental impact report (the “EIR”) is filed.**



How to Contact MEPA

- Questions?
- Feel free to contact us.
 - MEPA@mass.gov
 - MEPA contact list at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mepa-office-contact-list>
 - To receive Monitor alerts, send blank email to subscribe-mepa_environmentalmonitor@listserv.state.ma.us
 - MEPA website at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-environmental-policy-act-office>



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Please be informed that the MEPA Office has finalized amendments to 301 CMR 11.00 for promulgation on December 24, 2021. Two protocols relative to environmental justice have been issued with effective dates of January 1, 2022.

In addition, an amended Environmental Notification Form (ENF) is in effect as of January 1, 2022.

For more information, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-environmental-policy-act-office>.

This edition of the e-monitor contains projects submitted and certificates issued between Dec 16, 2022 and Jan 11, 2023*. If you are looking for a certificate issued after this date range please visit the [Recent Decisions](#) page.

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- SITE VISITS
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- SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATES
- ADVISORY OPINION
- PUBLIC NOTICES

- Environmental Notification Forms
- Environmental Impact Reports
- Notices of Project Change
- Special Review Procedure Request

Environmental Notification Forms

Please note: Due to restrictions on document size, only a small portion of the ENF document containing the project description is posted in the Environmental Monitor. Please reach out to the "project contact" identified below to request a complete copy of the ENF submittal.

EEA No. ⚙	Project Name ⚙	Municipality ⚙	Document Type ⚙	Comments Due ⚙	For Copies ⚙	MEPA Analyst ⚙	Actions
16646	Walnut Street Flood Mitigation	FRAMINGHAM	EENF	02/10/2023	Hailey Page, , (978) 532-1900, page.hailey@wseinc.com	Eva Vaughan, (857)408-6381, Eva.Vaughan@mass.gov	<div>VIEW</div> <div>COMMENT</div> <div>ATTACHMENTS(1)</div>

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Site Visits

EEA No. ⬆	Project Name ⬆	Municipality ⬆	Date ⬆	Time ⬆	Meeting Location ⬆
16642	Lincoln Logistics Middleborough	MIDDLEBOROUGH	01/18/2023	6:00 PM	REMOTE MEETING. Please RSVP to alexander.strysky@mass.gov at least one hour before the meeting for instructions on joining the video conference or calling in by phone
16642	Lincoln Logistics Middleborough	MIDDLEBOROUGH	01/19/2023	2:30 PM	Meet at the Panacea Wellness facility, 29 Harding Street, Middleborough.

Commenter Information

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Email address

First name

Last Name

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Phone Number

e.g. 617555555, +1617555555

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City

State

▼

Zip Code

Organization/Agency ?



















Affiliation

-Select One-

Comments

Comment Title or Subject*

Comments*








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4000 characters maximum. If you need more space, you can add comments as attachments below, or you can submit a new comment on the same authorization.

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