THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Agricultural Resources

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MDAR MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

CHARLES D. BAKER	KARYN E. POLITO	KATHLEEN A. THEOHARIDES	JOHN LEBEAUX
Governor	Lt. Governor	Secretary	Commissioner

NOTICE

Pursuant to the provisions of the Rights-of-Way Management Regulations, 333 CMR 11.00, to apply herbicides to control vegetation along rights-of-way, a five year Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) and a Yearly Operational Plan (YOP) must be approved by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). National Grid has submitted and holds a current VMP, therefore, notice of receipt of a YOP and procedures for public review is hereby given as required by Section 11.06 (3).

National Grid has submitted a YOP to MDAR for 2021 and National Grid's YOP identifies the following municipalities as locations where they intend to use herbicides to treat their electric Rights-of-Way in 2021:

Abington	Clinton	Lancaster	Norwell	Southborough
Andover	Cohasset	Lawrence	Oxford	Sterling
Ashburnham	Danvers	Leominster	Palmer	Stoughton
Attleboro	Dracut	Lowell	Peabody	Sturbridge
Auburn	Fitchburg	Mansfield	Pembroke	Sutton
Avon	Foxborough	Middleton	Pepperell	Swansea
Ayer	Georgetown	Milford	Plainville	Tewksbury
Belchertown	Gloucester	Millbury	Rehoboth	Tyngsboro
Beverly	Grafton	Monson	Rockland	Warren
Boxford	Groton	Newbury	Rockport	West Boylston
Boylston	Groveland	Newburyport	Rutland	Westminster
Brimfield	Hanover	North Adams	Salem	Winchendon
Brockton	Haverhill	North Andover	Scituate	Wrentham
Brookfield	Hingham	North Attleboro	Seekonk	
Charlton	Holden	North Reading	Shirley	
Chelmsford	Hull	Norton	Shrewsbury	

In 2021 National Grid will conduct a selective herbicide treatment program on their rights-of-way as part of an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program on transmission and distribution lines.

The intended vegetation control program will be consistent with the guidelines set forth in National Grid's VMP and YOP. Herbicides will be selectively applied to target vegetation by licensed/certified applicators carrying backpack or hand held application equipment.

National Grid will only use herbicides recommended by MDAR for use in sensitive areas for their IVM program. Pursuant to 333 CMR 11.04, no herbicides will be sprayed within any designated "no spray sensitive sites." Instead, mechanical only methods will be used to control vegetation in these areas.

Public notification will be provided to each "affected" municipality at least twenty-one days prior to any herbicide application and in a newspaper notification at least 48 hours before the beginning of the spray season.

In accordance with 333 CMR 11.06 (2), National Grid's YOP includes the identification of target vegetation; methods of identifying, marking and protecting sensitive areas; application techniques; the herbicides, application rates, carriers and adjuvants proposed for use; alternative control measures, a list of the application companies and YOP supervisor; procedures for handling, mixing and loading herbicides; emergency resources including local, state and federal emergency telephone numbers; maps of the rights-of-way that include mapped sensitive areas, and herbicide fact sheets and labels.

PUBLIC REVIEW

MDAR seeks to verify the location of sensitive areas defined in Section 11.02 and reported in the YOP. MDAR itself has a limited ability to survey the geography, land use and water supplies in all the communities through which rights-of-way pass. Municipalities have most of this information readily available, and the particular knowledge with which to better certify the sensitive areas in their communities. MDAR, therefore, requests, and urges the assistance of the "affected" municipalities in reviewing the completeness and accuracy of the maps contained in the submitted YOP.

The YOP can be viewed on MDAR's website: http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/pesticides/vegetation-management-and-yearly-operation-plans.html or National Grid's website: https://www9.nationalgridus.com/non_html/National%20Grid_2021%20YOP.pdf

MDAR has established the following procedures for this review:

Copies of the YOP and this *Notice* will be sent by the applicant to the Conservation Commission, Board of Health (or designated health agent), the Head of Government (Mayor, City Manager, Chair of the Board of Selectman) and appropriate water suppliers of each municipality where herbicides are to be applied during the calendar year of 2021; and if applicable, to the Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Municipal agencies and officials will have forty-five days, following receipt of the YOP, to review its map for inaccuracies and omissions in the location of "sensitive areas not readily identifiable in the field."

Municipal agencies and officials are requested to forward the YOP to the appropriate official(s) in their municipality who are qualified to certify the accuracy of the sensitive areas indicated on the maps. The maps should then be "corrected" and returned to the applicant and a copy should be sent to MDAR, at the address listed below, within the forty-five day review period. If a city or town needs more time to carry out this review, it should send a written request for an extension to MDAR and cite why there is a "good cause" for requesting additional time.

The applicant is required to make corrections and the corrected maps will be sent back to the city/town that requested the disputed changes within fifteen days of receipt of the request. MDAR will decide whether or not the YOP should be approved without the requested changes. MDAR will consider the "final approval" of a YOP individually for each municipality.

The twenty-one day public review period of the Municipal Notification Letter may serve concurrently with the forty-five day YOP review period in order to provide public notifications as required by 333 CMR 11.06-7, if the applicant has an approved VMP and if all the requisite city-town offices that received copies of the YOP completed their review and all corrections were duly made by the applicant and approved by MDAR.

A failure by the city/town to respond to the applicant's submission of the YOP within the forty-five day period will automatically be considered by MDAR to indicate agreement by the municipal officials with the sensitive area demarcations provided by the applicant in their YOP.

Any questions or comments on the information provided in this *Notice* and the procedures established for the municipal review outlined above should be addressed to:

Clayton Edwards, Rights-of-Way Programs
Massachusetts State Pesticide Bureau
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114-2151

Any questions or comments regarding the YOP should be addressed to:

Mariclaire Rigby
Lead Vegetation Strategy Specialist
National Grid Vegetation Management Strategy
939 Southbridge Street,Worcester, MA 01610

COMMENT PEROID ENDS AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS (5pm) Friday, February 2, 2021