

November 7, 2025

Tori Kim, Assistant Secretary and MEPA Director
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Comments Regarding September 2025 Proposed Amendments to 301 CMR 11.00

Dear Director Kim,

On behalf of the 495/MetroWest Partnership, please accept these comments on the 2025 Proposed Amendments to 301 CMR 11.00 that the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office released in September 2025 to expedite certain types of housing projects through MEPA review while ensuring that Environmental Justice (EJ) communities remain engaged in the review process.

By way of background, the 495/MetroWest Partnership is a public-private collaboration among businesses, municipalities, and other stakeholders focused on creating an environment that prepares for and cultivates sustainable growth across our 36-community region. Our mission is to lead the advancement of the 495/MetroWest region as an exceptional location for people, businesses, and communities. The Partnership accomplishes this by providing coordination, education, and advocacy for solutions to regional constraints.

The 495/MetroWest Partnership recognizes that there is an insufficient number of housing units in Massachusetts at present, which represents a threat to the economic vitality of the state and of the 495/MetroWest region. More housing units, both across the state and within our region, are necessary to support economic growth. More affordable and diverse housing options create benefits for all stakeholders, from younger workers and families looking to get their start in our region, to seniors looking to downsize while remaining in their home communities.

In that spirit, we broadly support efforts to streamline regulatory processes to expedite the creation of additional housing units, provided that responsible efforts to protect the health of our state's natural resources remain in place.

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Specific to the proposed amendments, several zoning and land use terms, including "transit-oriented development district" and "mixed-use district" feature in the proposed amendments while otherwise not being defined as part of the current MEPA process. Definitions of these terms vary across local zoning bylaws and throughout state law. These terms should be defined or clarified as not to trigger confusion.

Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration of these comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Palitsch", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

Jason Palitsch
Executive Director
The 495/MetroWest Partnership