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DETERMINATION OF NATURAL RESOURCE VALUE

PROJECT: Proposed Disposition of Lands in Bourne for the Purpose of Relocating Existing Pipeline Infrastructure
MUNICIPALITY: Bourne
EEA FILE NUMBER: A97_031_036
PROJECT PROPONENT: Algonquin Gas Transmission, LLC
DATE: July 20, 2026

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 3, § 5A, in order to file a petition with the legislature to use for another purpose or otherwise dispose of land or an interest in land subject to Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (“Article 97”), a public entity in most cases must, *inter alia*, “identify replacement land or an interest in land, which is not already subject to said Article XCVII, in a comparable location and *that is of equal or greater natural resource value, as determined by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs . . .*” (emphasis added), unless an exception applies. This document provides the determination of natural resource value as to the above-referenced proposal (“Project”).

This determination constitutes solely a determination of natural resource value pursuant to M.G.L. c. 3, § 5A(a)(ii) and does not indicate that the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs takes any position on the Project or on whether it complies with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (“EEA”) Article 97 Land Disposition Policy. This determination reflects the independent analysis of EEA for advisory purposes and does not create any right, benefit, or duty, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by any party in any judicial or administrative matter.

Project Description:

The Project involves the relocation of existing natural gas transmission infrastructure in the Town of Bourne to accommodate the replacement of the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges as part of the Commonwealth's Cape Cod Bridges Program. Existing natural gas pipelines and metering stations located on or adjacent to the existing bridge structures must be relocated to allow construction of the replacement bridges while ensuring uninterrupted natural gas service to Cape Cod.

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The proposed relocation of this infrastructure requires temporary and permanent easements across multiple parcels of land owned by the Commonwealth and under the care, custody and control of the Department of Fish and Game that are subject to Article 97. While some of the impacts are temporary and/or located within existing Eversource Right of Ways, there are approximately 5.27 acres of permanent easements needed across two parcels located within Camp Edwards Wildlife Management Area (“Impacted Lands”).

As mitigation for the permanent impacts proposed in the Project, the proponent is proposing to convey a 7 acre parcel of land which directly abuts Camp Edwards Wildlife Management Area (“Replacement Land”).

The Project is described in more detail in the Alternatives Analysis and Supplemental Materials which are posted on EEA’s website¹.

Information Considered:

This determination is based on a review of the Alternatives Analysis, other materials received by EEA in relation to the project, and EEA’s independent analysis. EEA’s analysis included the use of GIS and EEA’s Article 97 Natural Resource Site Evaluation Tool (“NRSET”) to characterize the Natural Resource Value of the Impacted Land and Replacement Land.

Characterization of Impacted Land:

The Impacted Land consists of 1.55 acres of permanent easements along the northern portion of Camp Edwards Wildlife Management Area and 3.72 of permanent easements in the southern portion of Camp Edwards Wildlife Management Area. The impacted areas share similar natural resource values, including wetlands, proximity to hiking trails and habitat protection. The NRSET evaluation also shows that the Impacted Land contains Prime Forest and Prime Farmland soils. The Impacted Land is restricted to the public due to its location within an active military facility and its primary purpose is to provide habitat for wildlife. The Impacted Land connects to approximately 15,000 acres of protected land.

Characterization of Replacement Land:

The Replacement Land consists of a 7 acre parcel which directly connects to Camp Edwards Wildlife Management Area. The Proponent is also required to convey an additional 53 acres to the Department of Fish and Game as mitigation for a Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Act taking. The Replacement Land will directly abuts this 53 acre portion of land, expanding the wildlife corridor. The Replacement Land contains wetlands, is proximate to hiking trails, and protects habitat. The NRSET evaluation also shows that the Replacement Land contains Prime Forest. Finally, the Replacement Land connects to approximately 15,000 acres of protected land.

Determination:

The Replacement Land is of equal or greater Natural Resource Value as compared to the Impacted Land. The Impacted Land and Replacement Land share similar natural resource values and Article 97 purposes, most notably Prime Forest and habitat protection. The Replacement Land protects a larger area as compared to the Impacted Land and expands the same wildlife corridor.

¹ [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/article-97-an-act-preserving-open-space-in-the-commonwealth-mgl-c-3-ss-5a#:~:text=97\)%20establishes%20a%20right%20to,or%20easements%20subject%20to%20Art.](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/article-97-an-act-preserving-open-space-in-the-commonwealth-mgl-c-3-ss-5a#:~:text=97)%20establishes%20a%20right%20to,or%20easements%20subject%20to%20Art.)