

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

WILLIAM M. STRAUS
REPRESENTATIVE
10TH BRISTOL DISTRICT
ROOM 134
TEL: (617) 722-2400

COMMITTEE
Chairman
Transportation

DISTRICT OFFICE
Tel: (508) 992-1260
William.Straus@MAhouse.gov

October 3, 2014

Mr. Chet L. McGhee
Regional Environmental Protection Specialist
Bureau of Indian Affairs – Eastern Regional Office
545 Marriott Drive, Suite 700
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

Re: FEIS for Proposed Fee-to-Trust Transfer of Property and Subsequent Development of Resort/Hotel and Ancillary Facilities in Taunton, MA and Tribal Government Facilities in Mashpee, MA by Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Dear Mr. McGhee:

Below, please find my comments concerning the final environmental impact statement for the above-referenced project, which was noticed on page 53077 of volume 179 of the Federal Register on September 5, 2014. I am a legislator representing communities in Bristol and Plymouth Counties south of the proposed project. This project affects the key road access points for private and commercial traffic between my region and the Boston area. I am also House Chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation.

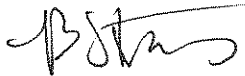
Specifically, I question the adequacy of the proposed traffic mitigation along Route 24 and at the Route 24/Route 140 interchange in connection with the casino development, as set forth in section 8.1.

As has been noted in prior comment letters with regard to this project, Route 24 currently operates at capacity, and the interchange has long been the subject of Massachusetts DOT planning efforts. Even today, for example, significant queues develop along Route 24 during the rush hour commute from I-495 to Route 140. With the increased number of vehicle trips expected from the casino development, these conditions and the impact to surrounding communities are therefore sure to worsen under any of the build alternatives.

The lane drop from three to two, which now exists at the I-495 Interchange on Route 24, is an existing bottleneck in need of correction. To permit a major development at the Route 24/Route 140 intersection without taking account of the existing conditions would be a disservice to the public having enormous detrimental economic and safety consequences.

For this reason, as a starting point, any mitigation plan under any build alternative must provide for the widening of Route 24 from the I-495 interchange to Route 140. This mitigation must be in place on day 1 of operation, and an appropriate contribution for the project must be required from the project proponent. Anything less is wholly inadequate.

Respectfully,



William M. Straus
State Representative
10th Bristol District