



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

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September 26, 2016

Matthew Beaton
Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
EEA, Attn: MEPA Office
Page Czepiga, EEA No. 15576
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to provide comment in response to the Environmental Notification Form in the above case, EEA No. 15576, submitted on behalf of the Town of Mattapoisett pursuant to the statutory review mandated under MEPA for the Shared Use Path, Phase 1B.

Without reservation, I believe that the ENF before you satisfies the statutory and regulatory requirements of the law and urge you to issue a Certificate which includes a finding that an Environmental Impact Report is NOT REQUIRED.

The next segment of the Mattapoisett portion of the Southcoast Bikeway (Phase 1B) will, when completed, represent one of the prize jewels in a pathway system for this region which will connect communities, provide alternative transportation access, and enhance the public's appreciation for the natural resources. This segment will bring the public into contact with beautiful river environments, beach and coastal areas all while completing an uninterrupted connection between the centers of Fairhaven and Mattapoisett. I have been an advocate for this project during my time in public office and the completed segments through all of Fairhaven and Mattapoisett Phase 1A have become extremely popular. The Fairhaven segment, to which this phase will connect, also provides access pathways into the state's Nasketucket Reservation.

The project is consistent with the region's growth management policy and regional transportation plan. It enhances public safety with an alternative transportation route for pedestrians and bike users to the congested Route 6 corridor. Educational, recreational and

transportation values are promoted by this project and it enjoys wide, if not nearly universal, support in the community.

The fact that Phase 1B brings the pathway through important environmental areas on the coast has been fully evaluated and considered in the 75% design level documents which are incorporated within the ENF. Drawing on my own prior experience as a member of the Mattapoissett Conservation Commission for several years, I feel confident that the ENF provides the level of detail required by MEPA.

In conclusion, I recommend your timely issuance of a Certificate which will allow the Town to pursue the specific permits which may be required in order to advance this project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Straus', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William M. Straus
State Representative
10th Bristol District

cc: Secretary of Transportation
Mattapoissett Selectmen