



*Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company*

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **MMWEC files draft environmental impact report for proposed power plant**

LUDLOW, Mass. – June 1, 2007 – A new power plant proposed by the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) will be “one of the most efficient and environmentally sound” plants in the United States, according to a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the project filed with state officials yesterday.

The four-inch-thick report, submitted by MMWEC to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), uses dozens of charts, maps and written descriptions of project operations to conclude that the plant “will have minimal impacts on environmental resources and the local community.” Among other things, the report examines impacts on air quality, wetlands, protected species, water use, noise levels and traffic.

There are many aspects of the proposed 280-megawatt project that minimize these impacts, including the use of advanced generating and emissions control technologies and the project’s location next to an existing 522-megawatt plant at MMWEC’s isolated, industrial-zoned Stony Brook site on Moody Street in Ludlow.

“There is an urgent need for new generating capacity among the MMWEC member utilities and within New England, and MMWEC’s new unit represents the most economic and efficient alternative for meeting a portion of that near-term need,” said MMWEC General Manager Glenn O. Steiger. “We also are planning to develop renewable energy and demand management resources, but the new unit at Stony Brook is a crucial piece of the MMWEC power supply,” he said.

An EOEA ruling on the DEIR for the MMWEC project is expected in mid-July, following a period of public comment on the report. Based on the EOEA ruling and comments received, MMWEC will then prepare a Final Environmental Impact Report, as required by the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). Approval of an environmental impact report is one of more than a dozen approvals and permits that MMWEC must obtain from various federal, state and local agencies in order to proceed with the project, which is scheduled for operation in 2010.

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“Once operating, the project will be among the cleanest power generating facilities in the United States,” the DEIR states. To minimize project emissions, the project’s primary fuel will be clean-burning natural gas with ultra-low-sulfur distillate oil as a secondary fuel. In addition, MMWEC is exploring the use of a biodiesel fuel blend for the project. Emissions will be reduced further through the use of “advanced, highly-efficient combustion technology and state-of-the-art emissions control technology,” the DEIR states.

MMWEC will use many components of the existing site infrastructure to meet the requirements for the new unit, further minimizing environmental impacts, according to the report. Existing pipelines for natural gas, fuel oil, water and wastewater discharge will support the new unit, and existing power lines will transmit electricity from the new unit to the regional power grid.

“Much of the infrastructure for this project is already in place, which is one reason that Stony Brook rose to the top in our site selection process,” Steiger said. “The existing site and facilities were designed 25 years ago to accommodate MMWEC’s future power needs,” he said. “That future is now.”

The project will use the latest and most efficient combined-cycle generating technology in which hot exhaust from a 180-megawatt combustion turbine generator will be used to produce steam and generate additional electricity in a separate, 100-megawatt steam turbine.

A recent change in project design will reduce significantly the project’s use of water, the DEIR states. MMWEC decided to use an air-cooled instead of a water-cooled steam condenser for the new unit, which will reduce the unit’s water use by approximately 90 percent.

Construction and operation of the project will result in the loss of only 0.7 acres of forested upland habitat on the 417-acre Stony Brook site. However, since forested upland is non-breeding habitat for adult blue-spotted salamanders, a state-protected species existing on the site, MMWEC will convert 2.5 acres of open land to forested habitat to compensate for the loss of forested upland, the report states.

While there are expected to be some temporary, indirect wetland impacts due to work required in wetland buffer zones, no direct impacts to wetlands are expected to result from construction or operation of the project, the DEIR states.

Copies of the DEIR are being distributed to all permitting agencies and numerous other individuals and entities that have expressed an interest in the project. Copies also will be available in the Ludlow and Monson public libraries as well as from MMWEC.

MMWEC is a non-profit, public corporation and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that provides a variety of power supply, financial and other services to the state’s consumer-owned, municipal utilities.