



Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: David Tuohey, Corporate Communications Manager
(413) 308-1392
dtuohey@mmwec.org

State certifies final environmental report on MMWEC power plant

LUDLOW, Mass. – December 7, 2007 – State Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian A. Bowles has determined that the Final Environmental Impact Report for a new generating unit proposed by the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) “adequately and properly complies” with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

In a Dec. 3, 2007 certificate of compliance, Secretary Bowles states that the project “requires no further review under MEPA and may proceed to permitting.”

MMWEC “has adequately assessed the potential impacts of the project and committed to measures that will avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts,” Bowles states. “I am also satisfied that any remaining issues can be addressed through the state and local permitting processes.”

The certificate outlines the numerous state and federal permits required for construction of the unit. It also lists the dozens of measures proposed by MMWEC to mitigate the project’s impacts on air quality, wetlands, wildlife, aviation, water supply, noise levels, traffic and other resources.

“Completing the MEPA process is a major step forward for the MMWEC project,” said MMWEC General Manager Glenn O. Steiger. “What this means is that we’ve properly identified and proposed measures to address the project’s environmental impacts, which is crucial in obtaining the needed permits and approvals,” he said.

MMWEC is proposing construction of a 280-megawatt, combined-cycle generating unit at its Stony Brook Energy Center site in Ludlow and concludes in the environmental impact report that the project “will have minimal impacts on environmental resources and the local community.” Steiger said the project is the most efficient, economic and environmentally sound method of meeting an urgent need for new generating capacity among MMWEC’s member utilities and within New England. MMWEC has identified a need for approximately 500 megawatts of new energy resources for its members, and the new unit will meet a portion of that need.

more

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, through its MEPA Office, conducts environmental impact reviews of certain projects for use by agencies involved in the permitting process.

The MEPA Office “does not pass judgment on whether a project is environmentally beneficial, or whether a project can or should receive a particular permit,” according to the office’s website. “Those decisions are left to the permitting agencies. MEPA review occurs before permitting agencies act, to ensure that they know the environmental consequences of their actions,” the website states.

MMWEC has received favorable rulings on the project and proposed mitigation measures from the Ludlow Conservation Commission, the state’s Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and the Federal Aviation Administration. Applications have been filed with the state Department of Environmental Protection and the federal Environmental Protection Agency for approval of the major air permits required for the project, and discovery is under way in the state Energy Facilities Siting Board case in which MMWEC is seeking approval to build the project.

To minimize emissions, the project’s primary fuel will be clean-burning natural gas with ultra-low-sulfur distillate oil as a backup. Emissions will be reduced further through the use of advanced, highly-efficient combustion technology and state-of-the-art emissions control technology.

The new unit will be located next to MMWEC’s existing 522-megawatt generating station and will use many components of the existing site infrastructure to minimize environmental impacts. Existing pipelines for natural gas, fuel oil, water and wastewater discharge will support the new unit, and an existing power line will transmit electricity from the new unit to the regional power grid.

“We also are developing renewable energy and demand management resources to meet our members’ needs, but the new unit at Stony Brook is a crucial piece of the MMWEC power supply,” Steiger said.

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.