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Friday, June 19, 2020

Secretary Stephanie Pollack
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Secretary Pollack,

I would first like to commend you and your team for all of your hard work on the replacement of the Allston Viaduct. This critical piece of transportation infrastructure is one of the back bones of our transportation network; it is critical to our future transportation and planning needs as a Commonwealth to get this once in a lifetime project correct. The alternatives that are now under consideration are the result of more than five years of extensive stakeholder engagement and community input and I am grateful for the time and effort that has been invested by all those involved.

As you prepare to reenter the state and federal environmental review process, I wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate one of the central considerations that my agencies have shared in previous comments. While it is not my role as Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs to decide which alternatives MassDOT should carry through the review process, it is incumbent upon DOT to weigh innumerable factors in advancing a project that contains the least environmental impacts while meeting the intended purpose and need. That said, any alternative that contains impacts on the Charles River, even temporary, is not only difficult to permit, but should be discounted in favor of alternatives with no temporary or permanent impact. The NEPA selection criteria calls for avoiding projects with an “excessive permanent environmental impact” and my agencies would consider any intrusion into the river excessive, especially if there are alternatives without any intrusion. The Charles River and surrounding basin is a historic

environmental asset to Boston and the surrounding communities, and any impacts should be weighed heavily in the review of the Allston Viaduct replacement project.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to the opportunity for my agencies to comment further through the MEPA and NEPA process. My entire team remains ready to assist in any way as the project reenters environmental review.

Best,

Katie

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "K. Theoharides". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a distinct "Theoharides" surname.

Secretary

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

CC: Commissioner Jim Montgomery, DCR
Commissioner Martin Suuberg, DEP