



MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL RAILROAD  
CAPE COD CENTRAL RAILROAD

Maintenance of Way and Railroad Operations Office

5/30/2019

Sarah Porter, Conservation Agent  
City of New Bedford  
133 William Street, Room 312  
New Bedford, MA 02740

RECEIVED

JUN 07 2019

City of New Bedford  
Conservation Commission

Re: Advanced Notice - Massachusetts Coastal Railroad - Vegetation Management

Dear Agent Porter,

The Massachusetts Coastal Railroad Corporation (MCRR) intends to initiate vegetation management practices in the Town of Berkley in the next few weeks in accordance with our Vegetation Management Plan (VMP), approved by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR).

Control of the vegetation and canopy overgrowth is an essential component of safe and efficient rail operations and is required by state and federal regulations. However, each year, tree canopy overgrowth results in felled branches and limbs extending onto the adjacent Right-of-Way (ROW) shoulders, which can restrict the line of sight and, accordingly, pose a significant danger to freight operations. In addition, high winds, ice storms and other inclement weather-related events cause limbs to fall and obstruct the clear and safe passage of trains. MCRR's VMP is critical for the safety of freight rail operations, freight rail employees, community residents, as well as the protection of the general interests of the Commonwealth and will: (1) keep the ROW clear for the safe passage of freight trains; (2) reduce the incidence and effects of slippery rail, which is encountered every fall because of the accumulating leaves along the tracks, impeding trains' ability to slow down or stop; (3) anticipate the winter season so that at-risk trees are removed or trimmed before snow, ice, or high winds bring them down onto the ROW; (4) ensure that poles and fiber optic cable lines can be installed and maintained in a clear pathway; and (5) improve the line-of-sight that is critical for safe daily operation.

On August 28, 2015 MCRR's VMP was submitted to the DAR for review and public comment and describes a variety of operational practices which include physical (mechanical cutting), chemical (herbicide application), and indirect methods used to manage, control, and eradicate vegetation on railroad ROW's. It also addresses the major components of vegetation management including the rationale for the various techniques, the buffering and protection of sensitive areas, the application of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), including an overview of the railroad ROW system.

The VMP outlines and interprets a 5-year program for managing vegetation in accordance with 333 CMR 11.00 Rights-of-Way Management and meetings were conducted in all impacted municipalities. The VMP received final DAR approval on April 26, 2016 and remains valid through 2021. A Yearly Operating Plan (YOP) is submitted annually with notice published in the Environmental Monitor, and that notification is shared with all concerned municipalities via certified mail. The YOP addresses the plans for implementing the Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) approach for the year, including identification of the communities within which vegetation management is planned.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this proposed work, please contact me at 508-291-7116 or [cpodgurski@masscoastal.com](mailto:cpodgurski@masscoastal.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Podgurski', written in a cursive style.

Chris Podgurski, President and COO

cc: James Eng, MassDOT Rail and Transit  
Chris Ross, DEP SERO  
John Lebaux, Commissioner MDAR  
Christina Connelly, COO  
Jamie Ponte, DPI Commissioner