

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

225 Turnpike Road, 3rd Floor, Southborough, MA 01772
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NOTICE

Pursuant to the provisions of the Rights-of-Way (ROW) Management Regulation, 333 CMR 11.00, in order to apply herbicides to control vegetation along railroad ROW, a five-year Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) and a Yearly Operational Plan (YOP) must be approved by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). Therefore, notice of receipt of a YOP and procedures for public review are hereby given as required by Section 11.06 (3).

A YOP has been submitted for Fore River Transportation Corporation. This plan has been prepared and submitted to MDAR by Benesch.

Municipalities identified in the Fore River Transportation Corporation YOP as locations where the ROW will be treated with herbicides during the 2025 calendar year are Braintree and Quincy.

Fore River Transportation Corporation's vegetation control program for 2025 will be consistent with the VMP as approved by MDAR and involves an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) approach.

One selective herbicide application will take place in the non-sensitive and sensitive area buffer zones along the roadbed portion of the ROW using an MDAR approved herbicide mixture. This program is targeted toward the eradication of woody and herbaceous plant species germinating within the roadbed and around other fixtures including but not limited to: switches, signals, signs, and highway grade crossings. This application will be followed by a late summer touch-up application in areas of heavy vegetation growth.

Brush control in areas adjacent to the roadbed will be accomplished as needed with manual and mechanical cutting.

Public notification (by registered mail) will be provided to the chief elected official, Board of Health, and Conservation Commission in each affected municipality at least twenty-one days prior to any herbicide application.

"Sensitive" areas as defined by the Rights-of-way Management Regulations will receive the full protection afforded by those Regulations. All herbicide applications will be done by an applicator properly licensed by MDAR Pesticide Bureau and fully trained in herbicide mixing, handling, and application methods.

The applicant has described the following ROW as sites that have been scheduled for herbicide treatment in 2025.

MAIN LINE

Braintree to Quincy

PUBLIC REVIEW

MDAR in particular seeks the verification of sensitive area locations reported in the YOP. MDAR itself has a limited ability to survey the geography, land use, and the water supplies, in all the communities through which the ROW are located. Municipalities, however, have most of this information readily available, and the particular knowledge with which to better certify the sensitive areas in their communities. Therefore, MDAR requests, and urges, the assistance of the affected municipalities, in reviewing the completeness and accuracy of the maps contained in the submitted document. MDAR has established the following procedures for this review.

The YOP may be viewed online at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/rights-of-way-vegetation-management-vmps-yops-and-notice> or at <https://www.fdcerrailroadvegetation.com/>.

An announcement containing an internet address where the YOP and a copy of this Notice will be sent by the applicant to the Conservation Commission, Board of Health (or designated health agent), and to the Head of Government (Mayor, City Manager, Chair of the Board of Selectman) of each municipality where herbicides are to be applied along the ROW during the calendar year and where applicable the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Municipal agencies and officials will have (45) forty-five days, following receipt of the YOP to review the maps contained in the document that indicate the location of "sensitive areas not readily identifiable in the field for inaccuracies and omissions. "Sensitive Areas" will be defined as in Section 11.01 a-f.

Municipal agencies and officials are requested to forward the YOP to the appropriate officials(s) in their municipality qualified to certify the accuracy of sensitive area locations as indicated on the maps. The maps should be "corrected" and returned to the applicant, also a copy of the maps with these corrections indicated should be sent to MDAR at the address listed below within the forty-five (45) day review period. If a city or town needs more time to carry out this review, it should send a written request for an extension to MDAR and cite why there is a "good cause" for requesting additional time.

All corrections will be required to be made by the applicant, and corrected maps sent back to the city/town before the YOP can be considered "approved" by MDAR for vegetation maintenance in that municipality. Any dispute on the part of the applicant regarding corrections made by the municipal authorities, should be indicated in writing to MDAR and to the city/town which requested the disputed changes within (15) fifteen days of receipt of the request. MDAR will decide whether or not the YOP should be approved without the requested changes. MDAR will consider the "final approval" of a YOP individually for each municipality.

The final (21) twenty-one days of the public review period may serve concurrently to provide public notification as required by section 11.07 of the Rights-of-Way Management regulation, if the applicant has an approved VMP and if all the requisite city/town offices which have received copies of the YOP have completed their review and corrections have been duly made by the applicant and approved by MDAR.

A failure by the city/town to respond to the applicants' submission of the YOP within the forty-five (45) day public review period, will automatically be considered by MDAR to indicate agreement by municipal officials with the sensitive area demarcations as provided by the applicant in their YOP.

Any questions or comments on the information provided in this Notice and the procedures established for the municipal review as outlined above, should be addressed to:

Rights-of-Way Program
Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau
225 Turnpike Road, 3rd Floor,
Southborough, MA 01772

Any additional questions or comments on any information provided as part of the proposed YOP should be addressed in writing to:

Matt Donovan
Benesch
19 Ocean Avenue, #5
Portland, Maine 04103

A copy should also be sent to the ROW program at the above address.

COMMENT PERIOD ENDS AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS (5pm) May 23, 2025