

Appendix D National Historic Preservation Act Guidance

Background

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of Federal “undertakings” on historic properties that are either listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. The term federal “undertaking” is defined in the NHPA regulations to include a project, activity, or program of a federal agency including those carried out by or on behalf of a federal agency, those carried out with federal financial assistance, and those requiring a federal permit, license or approval. See 36 CFR 800.16(y). Historic properties are defined in the NHPA regulations to include prehistoric or historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are included in, or are eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places. This term includes artifacts, records, and remains that are related to and located within such properties. See 36 CFR 800.16(1).

EPA’s issuance of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit is a federal undertaking within the meaning of the NHPA regulations and EPA has determined that the activities to be carried out under the general permit require review and consideration, in order to be in compliance with the federal historic preservation laws and regulations. Although individual submissions for authorization under the general permit do not constitute separate federal undertakings, the screening processes provides an appropriate site-specific means of addressing historic property issues in connection with EPA’s issuance of the permit. To address any issues relating to historic properties in connection with the issuance of this permit, EPA has included a screening process for applicants to identify whether properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are within the path of their discharges or discharge-related activities (including treatment systems or any BMPs relating to the discharge or treatment process) covered by this permit.

Applicants seeking authorization under this general permit must comply with applicable, State, Tribal, and local laws concerning the protection of historic properties and places and may be required to coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) and others regarding effects of their discharges on historic properties.

Activities with No Potential to Have an Effect on Historic Properties

A determination that a federal undertaking has no potential to have an effect on historic properties fulfills an agency’s obligations under NHPA. EPA has reason to believe that the vast majority of activities authorized under this general permit will have no potential effects on historic properties. This permit typically authorizes discharges from existing facilities and requires control of the pollutants discharged from the facility. EPA does not anticipate effects on historic properties from the pollutants in the authorized discharges. Thus, to the extent EPA’s issuance of this general permit authorizes discharges of such constituents, confined to existing channels, outfalls or natural drainage areas, the permitting action does not have the potential to cause effects on historical properties.

In addition, the overwhelming majority of sources covered under this permit will be facilities that are seeking renewal of previous permit authorization. These existing dischargers should have already addressed NHPA issues in the previous general permit as they were required to certify that they were either not affecting historic properties or they had obtained written agreement from

the applicable SHPO or THPO regarding methods of mitigating potential impacts. To the extent this permit authorizes renewal of prior coverage without relevant changes in operations the discharge has no potential to have an effect on historic properties.

Activities with Potential to Have an Effect on Historic Properties

EPA believes this permit may have some potential to have an effect on historic properties the applicant undertakes the construction and/or installation of control measures that involve subsurface disturbance that involves less than 1 acre of land. (Ground disturbances of 1 acre or more require coverage under the Construction General Permit.) Where there is disturbance of land through the construction and/or installation of control measures, there is a possibility that artifacts, records, or remains associated with historic properties could be impacted. Therefore, if the applicant is establishing new or altering existing control measures to manage their discharge that will involve subsurface ground disturbance of less than 1 acre, they will need to ensure (1) that historic properties will not be impacted by their activities or (2) that they are in compliance with a written agreement with the SHPO, THPO, or other tribal representative that outlines all measures the applicant will carry out to mitigate or prevent any adverse effects on historic properties.

Examples of Control Measures Which Involve Subsurface Disturbance

The type of control measures that are presumptively expected to cause subsurface ground disturbance include:

- Dikes
- Berms
- Catch basins, drainage inlets
- Ponds, bioretention areas
- Ditches, trenches, channels, swales
- Culverts, pipes
- Land manipulation; contouring, sloping, and grading
- Perimeter Drains
- Installation of manufactured treatment devices

EPA cautions applicants that this list is non-inclusive. Other control measures that involve earth disturbing activities that are not on this list must also be examined for the potential to affect historic properties.

Certification

Upon completion of this screening process the applicant shall certify eligibility for this permit using one of the following criteria on their Notice of Intent for permit coverage:

Criterion A: The discharges do not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties.

Criterion B: A historic survey was conducted. The survey concluded that no historic properties are present. Discharges do not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties.

Criterion C: The discharges and discharge related activities have the potential to have an effect on historic properties, and the applicant has obtained and is in compliance with a written agreement with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (TPHO), or other tribal representative that outlines measures the applicant will carry out to mitigate or prevent any adverse effects on historic properties.

Authorization under the general permit is available only if the applicant certifies and documents permit eligibility using one of the eligibility criteria listed above. Small MS4s that cannot meet any of the eligibility criteria in above must apply for an individual permit.

Screening Process

Applicants or their consultant need to answer the questions and follow the appropriate procedures below to assist EPA in compliance with 36 CFR 800.

Question 1: Is the facility an existing facility authorized by the previous permit or a new facility and the applicant is not undertaking any activity involving subsurface land disturbance less than an acre?

YES - The applicant should certify that fact in writing and file the statement with the EPA. This certification must be maintained as part of the records associated with the permit.

The applicant should certify eligibility for this permit using Criterion A on their Notice of Intent for permit coverage. The applicant does not need to contact the state Historic Commission. Based on that statement, EPA will document that the project has “no potential to cause effects” (36 CFR 800.3(a)(1)). There are no further obligations under the Section 106 regulations.

NO- Go to Question 2.

Question 2: Is the property listed in the National Register of Historic Places or have prior surveys or disturbances revealed the existence of a historic property or artifacts?

NO - The applicant should certify that fact in writing and file the statement with the EPA. This certification must be maintained as part of the records associated with the permit.

The applicant should certify eligibility for this permit using Criterion B on their Notice of Intent for permit coverage. The applicant does not need to contact the state Historic Commission. Based on that statement, EPA will document that the project has “no potential to cause effects” (36 CFR 800.3(a)(1)). There are no further obligations under the Section 106 regulations.

YES - The applicant or their consultant should prepare a complete information submittal to the SHPO. The submittal consists of:

- Completed Project Notification Form- forms available at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcform/formidx.htm>;

- USGS map section with the actual project boundaries clearly indicated; and
- Scaled project plans showing existing and proposed conditions.

(1) Please note that the SHPO does not accept email for review. Please mail a paper copy of your submittal (Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested) or deliver a paper copy of your submittal (and obtain a receipt) to:

State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston MA 02125.

(2) Provide a copy of your submittal and the proof of MHC delivery showing the date MHC received your submittal to:

NPDES Permit Branch Chief
US EPA Region 1 (OEP06-1)
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100
Boston MA 02109-3912.

The SHPO will comment within thirty (30) days of receipt of complete submittals, and may ask for additional information. Consultation, as appropriate, will include EPA, the SHPO and other consulting parties (which includes the applicant). The steps in the federal regulations (36 CFR 800.2 to 800.6, etc.) will proceed as necessary to conclude the Section 106 review for the undertaking. **The applicant should certify eligibility for this permit using Criterion C on their Notice of Intent for permit coverage.**