



May 15, 2013

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston MA 02114

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Attn: Ms. Holly S. Johnson

**Subject: Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Proposed Destination Resort Casino
Taunton, Massachusetts
Draft Environmental Impact Report
EEA # 14924**

Dear Secretary Sullivan:

On behalf of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Epsilon Associates is pleased to submit the enclosed Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Tribe's proposed destination resort casino in Taunton, which will be built on lands taken into trust by the federal Department of the Interior.

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The Tribe's Preferred Alternative comprises the casino, three 300-room hotels, an events center, several dining options, retail space, a water park, and parking for approximately 6,370 vehicles in both a garage and surface lots. In accordance with the ENF Certificate, the DEIR also examines two less intensive development scenarios and compares all of the alternatives to a future no-build condition.

The proposed project will create thousands of well-paying jobs and be a great economic benefit to the City of Taunton, the Commonwealth, and the Tribe. Construction alone is expected to generate approximately \$837 million in total economic activity in Massachusetts, while on-going operation of the resort is expected to generate approximately \$512 million annually. Direct employment for annual operation of the project is estimated at 3,500 full- and part-time jobs.

978 897 7100

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The Tribe has a strong tradition of careful use and conservation of natural resources. Since the filing of the ENF, the Tribe has continued to refine the design of the project to avoid and minimize impacts, and to mitigate for those that are unavoidable. For example, on-site impacts to wetlands and other water resources have been minimized by constructing the large majority of the development on

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areas that have already been disturbed and by making adaptive reuse of two existing buildings on site. Permanent on site wetland (BVW) impacts will be less than 5,000 square feet.

The Tribe has also continued to work with City of Taunton and MassDOT officials on the design for traffic mitigation measures, including improvements to the Route 24/140 Interchange. This collaborative planning is ongoing and the Tribe expects that the DEIR will be helpful in gathering further input regarding the proposed mitigation, which the Tribe expects will be finalized in the Final EIR.

To ensure that all interested parties have adequate time to review and comment on the DEIR, the Tribe requests that the comment period be extended by two weeks. We anticipate that the DEIR will be noticed in the May 22nd *Environmental Monitor* and request that the comment period end on July 12, 2013.

In accordance with the MEPA regulations, Epsilon has sent copies of the DEIR to all those that commented on the ENF. To conserve paper, some were sent electronic copies (in PDF format) on compact disc. Those that were sent electronic copies also received a letter advising them on how to request a paper copy if they would prefer one.

On behalf of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, we look forward to working with your office on the review of the DEIR. Please call me at (978) 461-6215 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

EPSILON ASSOCIATES, INC.



David E. Hewett, LEED AP
Associate