



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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April 28, 1997

Dennis Perry
Project Manager
Commonwealth Electric Company
2421 Cranberry Highway
Wareham, MA 02571



SDMS DocID **46272**

Re: 4/16/97 Meeting Minutes

Dear Mr. Perry,

This letter serves to memorialize the meeting of April 16, 1997 with representatives from EPA, COM/Electric, Army Corps of Engineers, and EPA's consultant, Foster Wheeler Environmental Corporation regarding the submerged power cables in the Acushnet River.

The meeting began with a recap of our discussions to date, including COM/Electric's formal comments to EPA in January 1997 in response to EPA's November 1996 Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Upper and Lower Harbor. Those comments voiced a preference for a solution to the cable crossing dilemma that involved a new system of cables and infrastructure to allow for complete dredging of the contaminated sediments, as well as one which kept these new features outside of the proposed CDFs (confined disposal facilities).

EPA then described one conceptual method of achieving this goal involving a) construction of one or more CDFs, b) dredging north to south from the Wood Street bridge area to the cable crossing area, c) placement of new cable and connection facilities in "clean" sediments just north of the existing cable corridor, d) conversion or switch-over from the old to the new cables and e) continuation of dredging over the old abandoned cables. The time required to get to (but not implement) step c was estimated at three to five years. This time frame would most likely mean that the proposed new 115 kVa cable would have to be installed twice - once in the existing cable corridor in 1999 or 2000 and again in the new cable corridor.

While this overall approach is potentially feasible, COM/Electric identified step d (conversion from the old to the new facilities) as problematic. This switch-over was characterized as taking up to two to three years to complete once the so-called non-electrical facilities were in place: remedial dredging would be delayed during this time until the conversion process was complete.



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COM/Electric then offered a concept of micro-tunneling or pipe-jacking under the river as an alternative. If feasible, it was believed that a subsurface approach might avoid the schedule problems discussed above, as well as the need to construct the new 115 kVa line twice. Additional advantages could be that environmental impacts associated with the routing of the cable(s) in the fringe saltmarsh areas on each shore would be limited to the "drop pit" required for deployment of the boring or tunneling equipment, and that all of the power infrastructure could be located outside of the Superfund CDFs.

Substantial discussion followed regarding the geology of the river crossing area and the need for adequate geotechnical information before proceeding too far with this concept. Existing boring logs were made available to COM/Electric as an initial step in this direction. It was suggested that one 36" tunnel and one 24" tunnel might suffice in order to keep the high voltage circuits separate from the medium voltage ones. COM/Electric agreed to develop an initial comprehensive "soup to nuts" cost estimate for a subsurface crossing of all the existing and proposed cables for discussion at the next meeting.

Also discussed was the issue of cost-sharing between EPA and COM/Electric for any construction efforts in this regard. It was acknowledged that any solution that involved a full new cable system outside of contaminated areas and that allowed for complete dredging of the upper harbor was to the benefit of both parties. Further discussions will be needed in this area once the technical approach and cost of the cable crossing project are more fully evaluated.

The next meeting was scheduled for May 21, 1997 in Wareham at 2:00 pm. Topics for this meeting were expected to be COM/Electric's further evaluation and initial cost estimate of the subsurface crossing concept, potential cost sharing for the project, and, if necessary, other alternatives.

EPA very much appreciates COM/Electric's cooperation in this difficult matter, and looks forward to the May 21 meeting. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me at 617/573-5735.

Sincerely,



David Dickerson
Remedial Project Manager

cc: M. Beaudoin (USACE) A. Fowler (FWEC)
C. Catri (EPA) P. Craffey (DEP)