

## **Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a Floodplain and a Wetland – Town of Isle au Haut/ Town of Stonington, Maine**

To: All interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) intends to fund the following Proposed Action under the Catalyst Program. NBRC will prepare an 8-Step Decision-Making Process review in compliance with Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management) as amended by EO 13690 (Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input), which established a more protective standard for evaluating flood risk to ensure projects funded by the Federal government are more resilient to the impacts of flooding. Additionally, NBRC will adhere to EO 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), which established a more protective standard in order to avoid to the extent possible the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands, as well as to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands where there is a practicable alternative.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to install a new a submarine electric power cable that will provide reliable power from Stonington to Isle au Haut, Maine. The new cable will be connected to existing transmission lines near the intersection of Seabreeze Avenue and Bayview Avenue in Stonington (44° 9'16.98"N, 68°39'37.13"W) and near a driveway at 430 Main Road in Isle au Haut (44° 4'36.73"N, 68°37'53.33"). The Isle au Haut Electric Power Company currently services the island through an existing submarine cable with electricity provided by Versant Power. The existing cable is more than 40 years old and beyond its expected lifespan. By upgrading the electric power cable, the Isle au Haut will continue to supply businesses and residents of Isle au Haut with a more reliable power source. The old electric power cable will not be removed and will serve as a backup power supply in case the new cable becomes damaged or requires repairs in the future.

The Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain was defined using the 1-percent annual chance floodplain (1 PFA), also known as the 100-year floodplain. Using the regional FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), NBRC has determined that a portion of the Proposed Action is mapped within the limits of the 100-year floodplain or the 1 PFA. The Proposed Action is within FFRMS floodplains at the Stonington and Isle au Haut landfalls. Additionally, the submarine cable intersects with floodplains. Accordingly, NBRC has determined that the Proposed Action warrants analysis under the 8-Step Decision-Making Process.

The wetland information for the Proposed Action was obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory (NWI) database. Using the NWI database, the wetlands in the project area are mapped as Estuarine and Marine Deepwater (offshore) and Estuarine and Marine Wetland (intertidal). The Proposed Action will collocate the new submarine cable with the existing infrastructure which is located within the NWI wetlands. Accordingly, NBRC has determined that the Proposed Action warrants analysis under the 8-Step Decision-Making Process.

This notice provides people who may be affected by the Proposed Action and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment with an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate impacts.

Comments should be submitted by email to [nepa@nbrc.gov](mailto:nepa@nbrc.gov). NBRC is accepting comments on this notice from **July 13, 2024**, through the end of the day of **July 27, 2024**.

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