



1 April 2008

Secretary Ian Bowles
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114
ATT: MEPA Office

RE: EOE #14195- Boston National Historic
Park, Pier 1, Ferry Landing,
Charlestown Navy Yard

Dear Secretary Bowles:

The Boston Harbor Association (TBHA) is a non-profit, public interest organization founded in 1973 by the League of Women Voters and the Boston Shipping Association to promote a clean, alive, and accessible Boston Harbor. Last month, the National Park Service briefed TBHA's Harbor Use Committee regarding proposed improvements to its ferry landing in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

Currently, Boston Harbor Cruises and Mass Bay Lines, commercial ferries, utilize the existing berth and loading platform on the south side of Pier 1 in the Charlestown Navy Yard. The existing berth consists of a 110 ft. by 30 ft. steel barge tied to the face of the pier, with a 35 ft. gangway which is not ADA-compliant. The proposed project includes expansion of the main pier through construction of a 26 ft. by 10 ft. pile supported pier, construction of a covered passenger waiting area on the pier, replacement of the existing barge with a 40 ft. by 30 ft. steel pile supported floating structure, and maintenance of the timber fender system.

The Boston Harbor Association has reviewed the project, and we commend the National Park Service for undertaking this project. We are very supportive of their plans for improvement of the ferry landing at Pier 1, Charlestown Navy Yard. Our comments on the specific project follow:

National Park Service planning process: Improvement of the ferry landing at Pier 1 is one element in the National Park Service's multi-year planning and implementation program for improved access and public visitation to the Boston National Historic Park, Charlestown Navy Yard. Later this spring, a new visitors center will open in Building 5 of the Park, with improved exhibits, public rest rooms for the general public, and one security screening area for visitors to the USS Constitution and the USS Cassin Young.

The improved ferry landing is a key element in the implementation of the National Park Service's plan to improve public access, and we commend the thoughtful, deliberate process in integrating both land-side and water-side improvements.

Consistency with the state Harbor Line: As proposed, the project extends beyond the state Harbor Line at this location and therefore requires approval by the State Legislature.

Consistent with other water-dependent use projects around Boston Harbor, such as the Central Artery/ Tunnel Project as well as the dock at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital along the lower Charles River, we urge that the project proponent seek an exemption to the state Harbor Line rather than an amendment. No comprehensive planning process has been undertaken regarding changes to the Harbor Line, and we recommend that a more comprehensive, harbor-wide review, rather than a piece-meal approach, should occur before there is legislation to effect any permanent change to the state Harbor Line.

Passenger waiting area: Proposed plans call for a covered passenger waiting area on the pier, in the area of the proposed gangway. The waiting area will be an open type structure. We commend the project proponent for promoting sustainability through usage of solar-powered LED lighting on the dock and in the passenger waiting shelter.

We ask that up-to-date water transportation information be available in the shelter, and that trash receptacles, if provided, be emptied on a daily basis to prevent debris from entering Boston Harbor.

Water Transportation in Boston Harbor: Consistent with The Boston Harbor Association's strategic plan and 2008 Workplan, TBHA is launching its Water Transportation Initiative beginning 1 April 2008. A Working Group chaired by Charles Norris, leading authority on water transportation in Boston Harbor, and Alden Raine, national expert on transportation and urban development and former Massport Executive Director, will host a series of meetings and release working papers on topics such as technical, market-based, economic, and mobility aspects related to water transportation. We anticipate that the Working Group will enhance our discussions, continued advocacy, and collaboration with our colleagues and other organizations in promoting a comprehensive water transportation network.

While the Working Group will not be meeting until later this month, we commend the National Park Service for proposing a project which will provide a safer water transportation facility. The new facility will allow for full accessibility at all tide levels, as well as a variety of freeboard heights to accommodate more vessels, all of which are consistent with efforts to increase water transportation for all in Boston Harbor.

Finally, we understand that funding is available for the Boston Redevelopment Authority to re-construct Pier 3 not far from Pier 1. We support Pier 3 as an additional secondary water transportation facility for the Charlestown

Navy Yard to complement the existing Pier 4 facility. With continued service at Pier 4, an improved Pier 1 facility, and a newly-built additional secondary water transportation facility at Pier 3, residents, workers, and visitors will have many water transportation options to the Charlestown Navy Yard in the years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vivien Li
Executive Director