

Comments - Environmental Permit Review	
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	
Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Division Comments	
Region A	
Applicant's Name: Maine Turnpike Authority	
Project #: L-27241-TG-A-N	Regulatory Agency: MDEP
Project Type: York Toll Plaza Relocation	Project Manager: Robert Green
Comments Due Date: 12-31-2016	Date Comments Sent: 12-31-2016
Project Location	
Town: York	County: York
Waterbody: wetlands	
Reviewing Biologist(s): Phillip deMaynadier, John Perry, Cory Stearns, Derek Yorks	

After review of the application and consideration of the proposal's probable effect on the environment, and on our agency's programs and responsibilities, we provide the following comments:

I. Project Description/Resource Affected:

The applicant is proposing to construct a new a new Toll Plaza along the Maine Turnpike at Mile 8.8 in York. During pre-application surveys, impacts to State Threatened spotted turtles and Special Concern ribbon snakes, along with each species associated habitats, were identified. Impacts to the critical terrestrial habitat of Significant Vernal Pools were also identified.

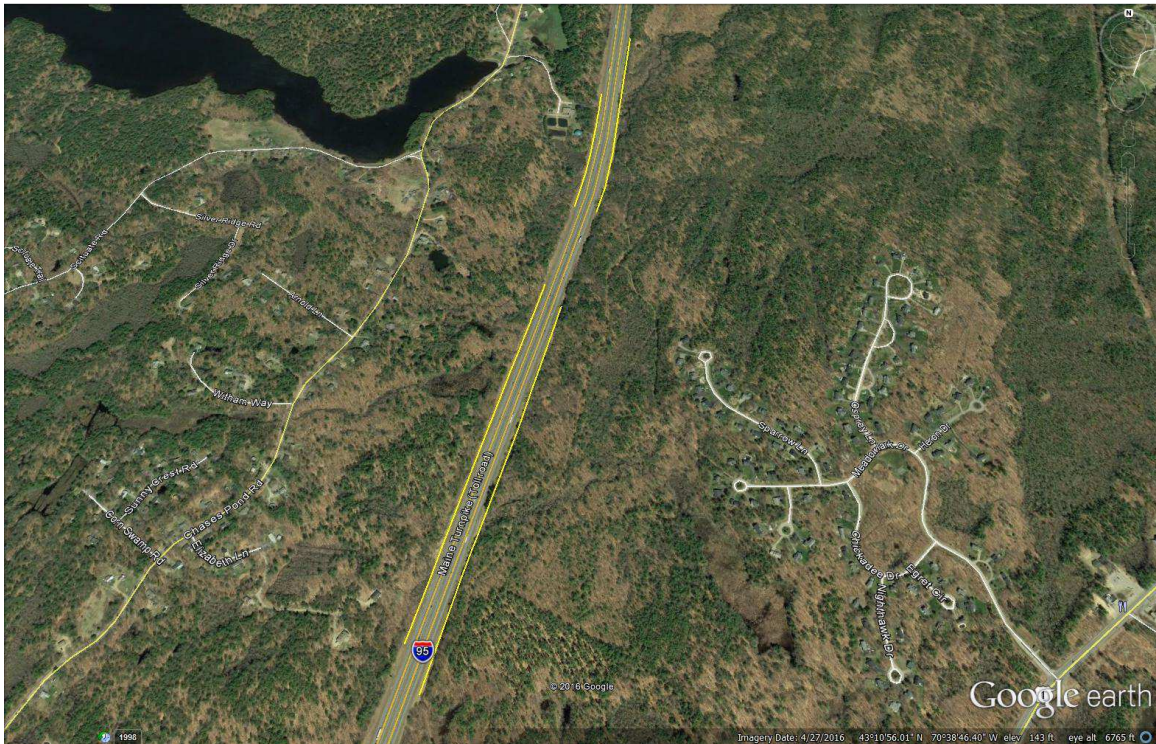
II. Comments/Recommended Considerations or Conditions:

Wildlife Considerations

MDIFW has worked with the MTA for two years on this project, working with their engineers and planning staff to avoid, minimize, and ultimately mitigate for impacts associated the proposed York Toll Plaza at Mile 8.8 on the Maine Turnpike. The result of this effort has culminated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MTA, MDIFW, and the Department of Transportation. As a signatory to the MOU, our Agency is comfortable that impacts to resources of MDIFW concern will be mitigated by the preservation of a portion of the adjacent MTA-owned Morrison parcel, a previously-permitted subdivision, which will preserve critical terrestrial habitat of Significant Vernal Pools and provide general habitat benefits to species of concern *in perpetuum*. In addition, the installation of wildlife barrier fencing and construction of a wildlife passage structure to provide connectivity for State-listed turtles and other species along a causeway on Route 236 in Eliot will offset onsite impacts to listed animals.

Wildlife barrier fencing will also be installed along a stretch of the turnpike in the area of the proposed Toll Plaza. The MTA will install and maintain the wildlife barrier fencing

according to specifications provided to and approved by MDIFW, on both sides of the highway in the vicinity of the new Toll Plaza, preventing spotted turtles from entering the highway. To date these plans have not been submitted to our Agency for review. However, the preliminary location of the fencing is depicted in a map (below) that MDIFW submitted to the MTA, and we have had several conversations with the MTA regarding this issue. Based on these conversations, it is our understanding that the fencing will be attached to the existing right-of-way fencing by MTA maintenance staff and will be of a material and mesh size small enough to prohibit turtles—including juvenile turtles—from entering the highway. It is also our understanding that the fencing will be tied into the ends of the existing culverts along this stretch.



Assuming that the barrier fencing will be installed along the new Toll Plaza, and given the conditions described in the Memorandum of Understanding between the MTA, MDIFW, and the MDOT, our Agency feels that impacts to State-listed species and critical terrestrial habitat of Significant Vernal Pools that will result from this project will be adequately mitigated for.

Fisheries Considerations

There are no inland fisheries concerns associated with this project.