



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex
73 Weir Hill Road
Sudbury, MA 01776-1420

February 14, 2023

Alexander Strycky, Environmental Analyst
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office
100 Cambridge Street
Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: L.G. Hanscom Field North Airfield Development Environmental Notification Form (January 2023)-
EEA #16654

Dear Mr. Strycky,

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has reviewed the recent documentation by Runway Realty and North Airfield Ventures, LLCs via VHB for the L.G. Hanscom Field North Airfield Development proposal to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA Office). Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Concord Unit off Monsen Road in Concord located less than two miles away from the proposed project location. In response to the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) submitted by the proponent to your office, the FWS has concerns about the proposed projects impacts to wildlife, traffic, noise & air pollution.

Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) was established May 3, 1944, under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. § 715d) and Refuge Recreation Act (16 U.S.C. § 460k-1) for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds. (16 U.S.C. § 715d). We manage the Refuge for the protection of natural resources, (16 U.S.C. § 460k-1), the conservation of threatened or endangered species (16 U.S.C. § 460k-1) and allow for incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development. (16 U.S.C. § 460k-1).

The Refuge is a 3,874-acre collection of parcels of land located approximately 20 miles west of Boston, in the historic towns of Concord, Sudbury, Bedford, Billerica, Lincoln, Carlisle, and Wayland. Great Meadows NWR stretches 12 miles from State Route 4 in Billerica to the Framingham/Wayland town line along the Concord and Sudbury Rivers. The refuge provides habitat for a variety of species, including migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, wading and marsh birds. The upland areas support woodcock, songbirds, and many raptors. The marsh habitats are utilized by amphibians and reptiles. The Refuge attracts over 460,000 visitors a year and is a favorite bird watching and hiking spot in the area. Currently, the Refuge is impacted by the sounds of aircraft flying over and its disturbance to wildlife and visitors. Any project which could further exacerbate these current issues is a real concern for Refuge Management.

In reading through the analysis in the ENF and after attending the 2/6/23 presentation it is still unclear how the project would impact Federal Trust Species. In a cursory review of the project area in the FWS Information for Planning and Consultation Tool (IPAC) the project overlapped species ranges for Northern Long-eared Bat, Monarch Butterflies, and 14 migratory birds. The federal permitting for the overall project through the Federal Aviation Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency triggers both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106. Please add us to the distribution list for future notifications related to this project and work with the FWS' New England Field Office in Concord, NH on the NEPA review and mitigate any impacts to federal trust resources.

Sincerely,



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Cc:

David Simmons, USFWS New England Field Office
Simone Monteleone, NPS-Minute Man National Historical Park
Emma Lord, NPS SUASCO W&S River Partnership