COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
ENERGY FACILITIES SITING BOARD

Petition of NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy for Individual and a Comprehensive Zoning Exemption from the Operation of the Zoning Bylaws of the Towns of Plymouth and Wareham, Massachusetts, Pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3	)	EFSB 25-02

TENTATIVE DECISION

On the Decision:

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Presiding Officer
October 19, 2026

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ABBREVIATIONS

2024 Climate Act	An Act Promoting a Clean Energy Grid, Advancing Equity and Protecting Ratepayers, St. 2024, c. 239
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
APOD	aquifer protection overlay district
ARR	annual reliability report
ASI	American Standards Institute
Berkshire Power	Berkshire Power Development, Inc., D.P.U. 96-104 (1997)
BMP	best management practice
CGP	construction general permit
CIP	capital investment project
dBA	A-weighted decibels
Department	Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities
DER Interconnection Tariff	Eversource's Standards for Interconnection of Distributed Generation, M.D.P.U. No. 55A
DER	distributed energy resources
DERMS	distributed energy resource management system
DERPG	Distributed Energy Resources Planning Guide
DG	distributed generation
DSPG	Distribution System Planning Guide
EDC	electric distribution company
EEA	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
EFSB	Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board
EJ	environmental justice
EPS	electric power system

ERP	emergency response plan
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
G.L. c.	Massachusetts General Laws chapter
GWh	gigawatt-hour
Hillman ESS	Hillman Energy Center, LLC, EFSB 25-08 (2026)
HMLP	Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant, EFSB 24-01/D.P.U. 24-135 (2026)
Hopkinton LNG	Hopkinton LNG, D.P.U. 17-114 (2018)
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers
IRP	New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid, EFSB 12-1/D.P.U. 12-46/12-47 (2014)
ISO-NE	Independent System Operator of New England
IVM	integrated vegetation management
K Street Substation	NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U. 17-147 (2019)
kV	kilovolt
LCC	load carrying capacity
LSP	licensed site professional
LTE	long-term emergency
Martorano	Martorano v. Department of Public Utilities, 401 Mass. 257 (1987)
MassDEP	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
MCP	Massachusetts Contingency Plan
MDAR	Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
MEPA	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
MHC	Massachusetts Historical Commission

Mid-Cape Project Change	NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 19-06A/D.P.U. 19-142A/19-143A/23-22 (2025)
Mid-Cape Reliability Project	NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 19-06/D.P.U. 19-142/19-143 (2022)
MVA	megavolt ampere
MW	megawatt
NERC	North American Reliability Corporation
NESC	National Electrical Safety Code
NHESP	Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
Notice	Notice of Adjudication and Public Comment Hearing, EFSB 25-02
NPCC	Northeast Power Coordinating Council
NWA	non-wires alternative
NY Central Railroad	New York Central Railroad v. Department of Public Utilities, 347 Mass. 586 (1964)
Oak Bluffs ESS	NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U.18-155 (2020)
PAL	The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.
Park City Wind	Park City Wind LLC, EFSB 20-01/D.P.U. 20-56/20-57 (2023)
Plymouth CIP	Plymouth capital investment project
Plymouth Group Substations	seven substations that serve the Plymouth Group Study area, including the West Pond and Tremont Substations
Plymouth Group Upgrades	specific EPS upgrades that the Company proposed in the Plymouth CIP, including the Project, as part of NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U. 22-52/22-53/22-53/22-54/22-55 (2024)
Plymouth Order	portions of NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U. 22-52/22-53/22-53/22-54/22-55 (2024) applicable to the Plymouth CIP and the Plymouth Group Upgrades

Plymouth Zoning Bylaws	Town of Plymouth Zoning Bylaws
PNF	Project Notification Form
Project	proposed expansions of Eversource's West Pond Substation and Tremont Substations
Provisional Program	Provisional System Planning Program, D.P.U. 20-75-B (2021)
ResilientMass Action Team	RMAT
Roadmap Act	An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, St. 2021, c. 8
ROW	right-of-way
Save the Bay	Save the Bay v. Department of Public Utilities, 366 Mass. 667 (1975)
SF_6	sulfur hexafluoride
Siting Board	Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board
Southcoast Wind	Southcoast Wind Energy LLC, EFSB 22-04/D.P.U. 22-67/22-68 (2024)
Substation Expansions	Proposed expansions of Eversource's West Pond and Tremont Substations
Sudbury-Hudson	NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 17-02/D.P.U. 17-82/17-83 (2019)
SWPPP	stormwater pollution prevention plan
TOV	transient overvoltage
Town of Truro	Town of Truro v. Department of Public Utilities, 365 Mass. 407 (1974)
Tremont Substation Expansion	Expansion of Eversource's Tremont Substation
Tremont Substation Expansion Site	4 North Carver Road Extension in Wareham, Massachusetts
TSDAG	Transmission System Design and Analysis Guideline

USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Vineyard Wind	Vineyard Wind LLC, EFSB 17-05/D.P.U. 18-18/18-19 (2019)
Wareham Zoning Bylaws	Zoning By-Laws of the Town of Wareham, Massachusetts
West Pond Substation Expansion	expansion of Eversource's West Pond Substation
West Pond Substation Expansion Site	0 Federal Furnace Road in Plymouth, Massachusetts

Summary of Tentative Decision

NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy ("Eversource" or the "Company") proposes to expand both the West Pond Substation located at 0 Federal Furnace Road in Plymouth, and the Tremont Substation located at 4 North Carver Road Extension in Wareham (together, "Project"). Pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3, the Company requests that the Siting Board grant individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the operation of the Town of Plymouth Zoning Bylaws ("Plymouth Zoning Bylaws") and the Zoning By-Laws of the Town of Wareham ("Wareham Zoning Bylaws") to construct and operate the Project. Eversource argues that the Project would be unable to meet several provisions in the respective zoning bylaws and therefore exemptions from the Zoning Bylaws are necessary. The Company indicates that there is no relief for certain of these zoning provisions whereas others would require a special permit or variance, which could subject the Project to various legal uncertainties and delay.

Eversource proposes the Project as part of the Plymouth Group Upgrades, which the Company designed to implement the Plymouth capital investment project ("Plymouth CIP") previously approved by the Department of Public Utilities ("Department"). The Plymouth CIP was approved under the Department's Provisional Program, which established a provisional framework for planning and funding upgrades to the electric power system and supporting timely and cost-effective development and interconnection of distributed energy resources ("DER"). Provisional System Planning Program, D.P.U. 20-75-B (2021). Eversource maintains that the Project is necessary to enable interconnection of more DER projects and enhance reliability for distribution customers in the Plymouth area. The Company argues that the Plymouth Group Upgrades and the Project are the best and most cost-effective means to achieve such outcomes. The Company indicated that the Project cost increased from the initial 2022 estimate of $102.5 million to $166.4 million today due to escalation in equipment and material pricing, as well as other factors.

To grant the requested zoning exemptions, the Siting Board is required to determine whether: (1) the Company qualifies as a public service corporation; (2) the Project is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare; and (3) an exemption from local zoning is required. The Tentative Decision finds that Eversource is a public service corporation, and that the Project as proposed is necessary and will provide public benefits. An evaluation of the environmental impacts shows that the Project meets the applicable standard of serving the public convenience or welfare. Certain environmental impacts would be temporary and limited to Project construction, such as construction noise, hauling of excavated soil off-site, and construction dust and air emissions from construction equipment. Other potential environmental impacts include 0.3 acres of tree removal, increased stormwater runoff (pre-mitigation) at the West Pond Substation, potential pure tone conditions at the expanded West Pond Substation, and increased amounts of sulfur hexafluoride stored and used at both Substations. The Company would avoid, minimize and mitigate these impacts through best management practices and proposed mitigation measures, and compliance with the conditions of the Tentative Decision. The Tentative Decision recommends approval of the zoning exemption petition, with conditions.

Pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3, the Energy Facilities Siting Board ("Siting Board") hereby [approves], subject to the conditions set forth below, the petition of NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy ("Eversource" or the "Company"), seeking individual and comprehensive exemptions from the Town of Plymouth Zoning Bylaws and the Town of Wareham Zoning Bylaws.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Description of the Proposed Project

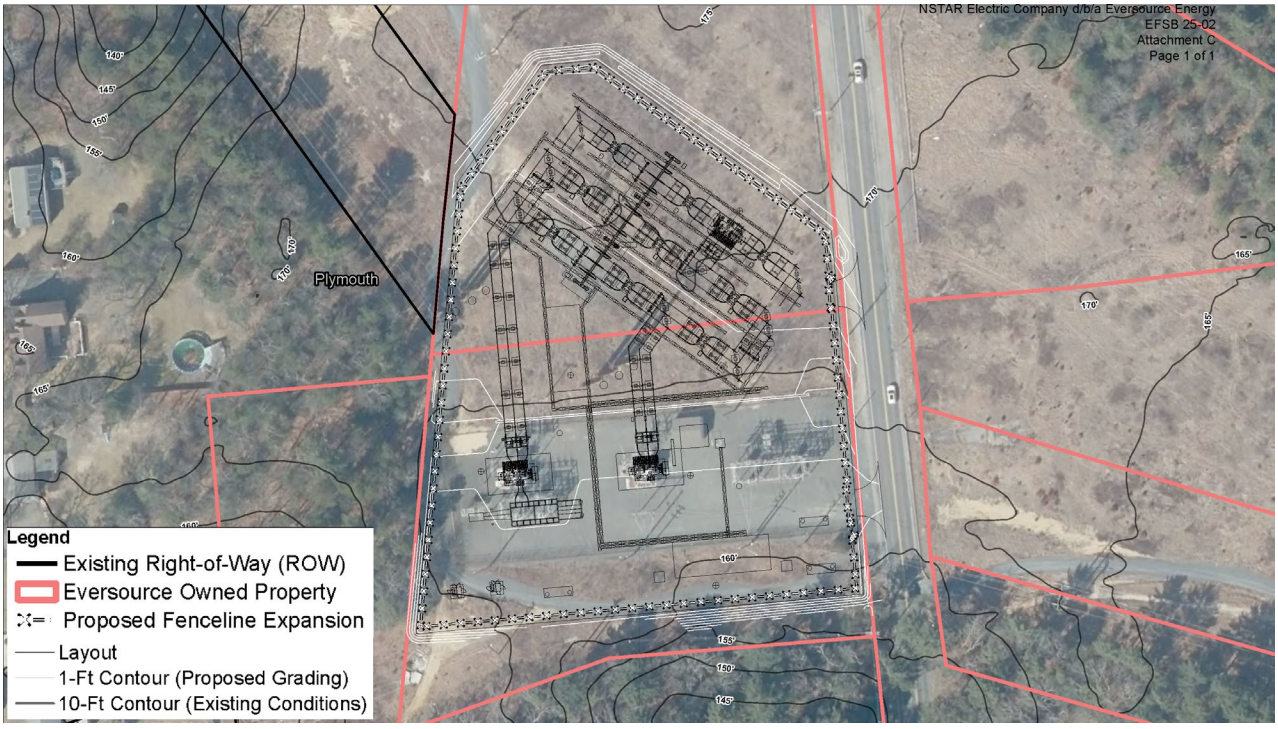
On February 21, 2025, Eversource filed a petition with the Siting Board pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3 seeking individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the operation of the Town of Plymouth Zoning Bylaws ("Plymouth Zoning Bylaws") and the Zoning By-Laws of the Town of Wareham ("Wareham Zoning Bylaws") for expansion of Eversource's West Pond Substation ("West Pond Substation Expansion") located at 0 Federal Furnace Road in Plymouth ("West Pond Substation Expansion Site"), and Tremont Substation ("Tremont Substation Expansion") located at 4 North Carver Road Extension in Wareham ("Tremont Substation Expansion Site") (together, the "Project" or "Substation Expansions") (Exh. EV-1, at 1). The Company asserts that the Project is needed for the Company to maintain a reliable electric power system and to enable distributed energy resources ("DER")[1] to safety interconnect and operate in the Project area (Exh. EV-1, at 1-2). The Project is part of the Plymouth capital investment project ("Plymouth CIP") that the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities ("Department") approved in NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U. 22-52/22-53//22-54/22-55 (2024) ("Plymouth Order") (Exh. EV-1, at 3).

The West Pond Substation Expansion Site consists of two Company-owned adjacent parcels of land that together comprise approximately eight acres (Exh. EV-1, at 5). The existing West Pond Substation is located on the smaller, approximately 2.4-acre parcel (Exh. EV-1, at 5). Eversource would expand the fenced area from 34,900 square feet (0.8 acres) to 108,900 square feet (2.5 acres) (Exh. EV-1, at 5, 36). The scope of the expansion of this 115 kilovolt ("kV")

[1] The Company uses the terms distributed generation ("DG") and distributed energy resources ("DER") interchangeably (Exh. EV-1, at 2, n.3).

substation includes: (1) replacing two 50 megavolt ampere ("MVA") transformers with three 75 MVA transformers, each with passive secondary spill containment; (2) installing a 115-kV six-breaker ring bus; (3) replacing one out of two open-air 23-kV buses with walk-in metal clad, double-bus, double-breaker switchgear; (4) replacing two out of three capacitor banks; (5) installing a new relay and control enclosure; (6) installing new drainage structures; and (7) installing approximately 1,400 feet of galvanized chain link mesh fence around the expanded substation (Exhs. EV-1, at 6; EFSB-CM-1). In addition, the Company would relocate four existing transmission line structures into the transmission right-of-way ("ROW") to accommodate the West Pond Substation Expansion (Exh. EV-1, at 6). Figure 1 below shows the conceptual layout of the West Pond Substation Expansion.

Figure 1. West Pond Substation Expansion Conceptual Layout

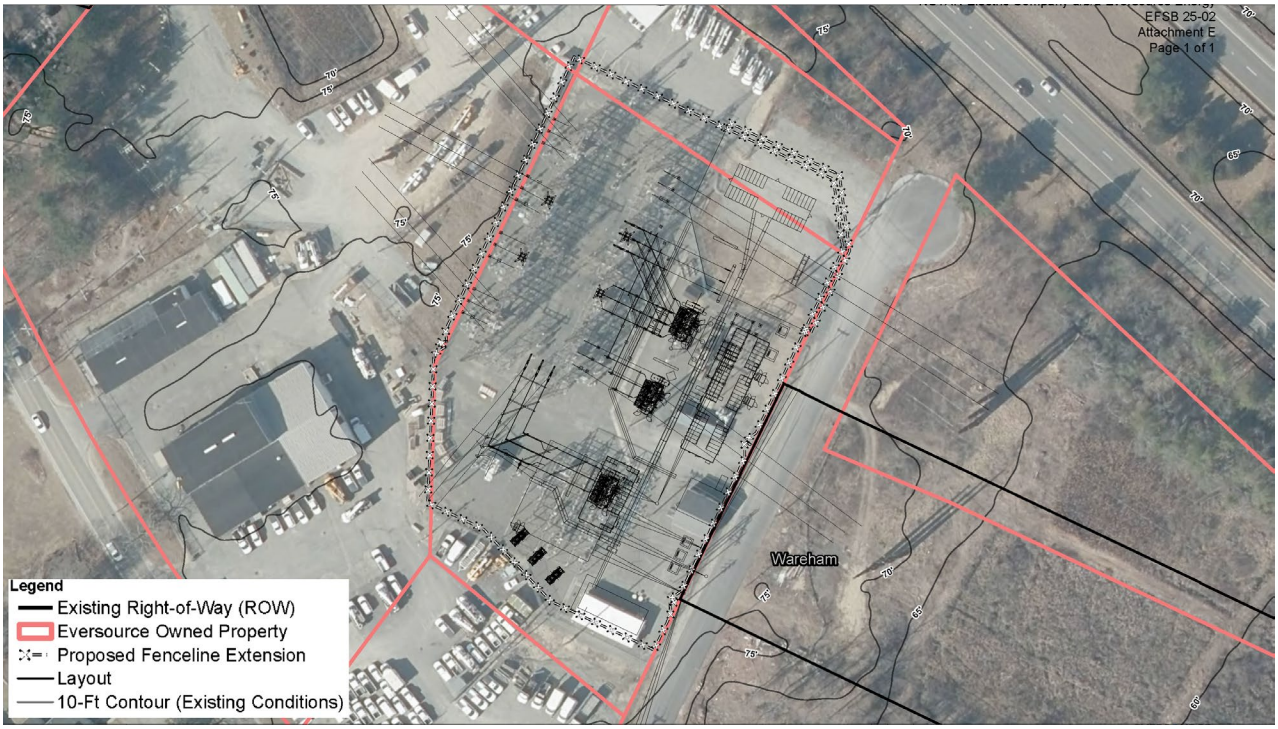


Source: Exh. EV-1(C). Modified by staff for legibility.

The Tremont Substation Expansion Site would consist of two adjacent Company-owned parcels of land that together comprise approximately 2.7 acres (Company Brief at 6, citing Exh.

EV-1, at 7). The existing Tremont Substation is located on the larger, approximately 2.1-acre parcel (Exh. EV-1, at 7). The Company would expand the substation's fenced area from 78,000 square feet (1.8 acres) to 91,500 square feet (2.1 acres) (Exh. EV-1, at 7, 37). The scope of the expansion of this 115 kV substation includes: (1) replacing one 28-MVA transformer and one 22.4-MVA transformer with three 75-MVA transformers, each with passive secondary spill containment; (2) replacing two existing 23-kV buses with two new walk-in metal-clad switchgear enclosures; (3) installing three new capacitor banks; and (4) installing approximately 150 feet of galvanized chain link mesh fence around the expanded substation (Exhs. EV-1, at 8; EFSB-CM-1). Figure 2 below shows the conceptual layout of the Tremont Substation Expansion.

Figure 2. Tremont Substation Expansion Conceptual Layout



Source: Exh. EV-1 (E). Modified by staff for legibility.

Based on the Department-approved Plymouth CIP in the Plymouth Order, the Company initially provided 2022 planning grade Project cost estimates (+25/-25 percent accuracy) for the Project, shown as "2022 Estimates" in Table 1 (Exh. EFSB-C-7). The Project cost includes

engineering, project management, siting, permitting, materials, construction, and testing (Exh. EV-1, at 7-8).

On October 6, 2026, the Company provided updated planning grade Project cost estimates, shown as "2026 Estimates" in Table 1. The Company contends that the updated estimates are based on more recent information and further progress in project engineering and design and reflect a higher level of certainty (RR-EFSB-8, part a). The Company noted that the increase in Project cost is due to significant escalation in equipment and material pricing, extension of the Project schedule, labor cost escalation, and design updates (RR-EFSB-8, part a). Major equipment and materials escalation attributes to $23.2 million (63%) of the cost increase for the West Pond Substation Expansion and $20.4 million (76%) of the cost increase for the Tremont Substation Expansion (RR-EFSB-8, part a).

Table 1. Project Cost Change (in Millions -25%/ +25%)

Project Component	2022 Estimate	2026 Estimate	Change from 2022 (amount / %)
West Pond Substation Expansion	$61.4	$98.4	+$37.0 / 60.3%
Tremont Substation Expansion	$ 41.1 [2]	$68.0	+$26.9 / 65.5%
Total Project Cost:	**$102.5**	**$166.4**	**+$63.9 / 62.3%**

Source: Exh. EFSB-C-7; RR-EFSB-8, part a.

The Company also provided a breakdown of the 2026 Project cost estimates by type of costs, namely distribution costs and transmission costs, as shown in Table 2 below.

[2] The Company inadvertently omitted $3.5 million associated with the installation of a new circuit switcher in the original 2022 Tremont Substation Expansion cost estimate of $37.5 million (see Exh. EV-1, at 8) and provided a revised 2022 cost estimate of $41.1 million (see Exh. EFSB-C-7; RR-EFSB-6).

Table 2. Project Cost by Type of Cost (in Millions -25%/ +25%)

Project Component	Distribution Cost	Transmission Cost	Total Cost
West Pond Substation Expansion	$59.9	$38.5	$98.4
Tremont Substation Expansion	$68.0	-	$68.0
Total Project Cost:	**$127.9**	**$38.5**	**$166.4**

Source: RR-EFSB-7; RR-EFSB-8, part b.

According to the Company, the Project's distribution-related costs would be allocated between DER applicants and Eversource ratepayers as shown in Table 3 below.[3] The Company stated that the total distribution cost associated with Tremont Substation Expansion, $68.0 million, consists of approximately $41.8 million of DER-related substation costs and approximately $26.2 million of reliability-related capital upgrades to address potential thermal overloads (RR-EFSB-8, part b; Exh. EV-1, at 29, n.18). Only DER-related substation costs are eligible for DER customer reimbursement (RR-EFSB-8, part b).

Table 3. Distribution Cost Allocation (in Millions -25%/ +25%)

Distribution Component	Total Cost	Allocation to DER Applicants (amount / %)	Allocation to Eversource Ratepayers (amount / %)
West Pond Substation Expansion (Substation Distribution Upgrades)	$59.9	$31.1 / 51.9%	$28.8 / 48.1%
Tremont Substation Expansion (Substation Distribution Upgrades)	$68.0	$21.7 / 31.9%	$46.3 / 68.1%
Total Distribution Cost	**$127.9**	**$52.8 / 41.3%**	**$75.1 / 58.7%**

Source: RR-EFSB-8, part b.

The Company stated that, despite the significant cost increases for these the distribution upgrades associated with the Substation Expansions, the aggregated cost to DER applicants for the

[3] The Department ordered the Company to implement strict cost control measures wherever possible in the construction of the Plymouth CIP to both assist DER applicants in pursuing interconnection, mitigate cost burdens to distribution customers and ensure only necessary costs are incurred by the Company. D.P.U. 22-54-A/22-55-A at 42 (2026).

distribution portion of the Plymouth Group Upgrades (i.e., Plymouth CIP Fee), would remain within the plus or minus 25 percent range of the $224/kW approved in the Plymouth Order (RR-EFSB-8, part b). The Company also clarified that the approximately 56-to-44 percent allocation between DER applicants and Eversource ratepayers, as approved in the Plymouth Order and identified in Exh. EFSB-C-3 represents the aggregate, cost-weighted allocation for the entire distribution portion of the Plymouth Group Upgrades rather than a single allocation ratio applied uniformly to each distribution component of the Plymouth Group Upgrades (RR-EFSB-8, part c).

The Project's transmission upgrade costs, namely the $38.5 million associated with the West Pond Substation Expansion, would be recovered from wholesale customers per Local Service charges under Schedule 21-ES (Part B) to the Independent System Operator of New England ("ISO-NE") Open Access Transmission Tariff and assessed in proportion to the Local Service load of each NSTAR Electric wholesale customer (RR-EFSB-4; RR-EFSB-8). Based on 2024 Local Service load data, NSTAR Electric (one of Eversource's electric distribution company serving the Plymouth area) would pay over 97% of these local transmission costs, with the remaining transmission costs recovered from other Eversource wholesale customers such as Massport, Nantucket Electric Company, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, and Concord Municipal Light Plant (RR-EFSB-4). NSTAR Electric would pass on its allocated transmission costs to its distribution customers through the retail transmission charge in the Company's Transmission Cost Adjustment Tariff, M.D.P.U. No. 48 (RR-EFSB-4).

B. Procedural History

On February 21, 2025, Eversource filed its petition with the Siting Board pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3 requesting individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions necessary to construct and operate the proposed Project (Exh. EV-1, at 1-2). The Project was originally submitted to the Department for review in 2022, in accordance with the Department's directives in its Order on Provisional System Planning Program, D.P.U. 20-75-B (2021) ("Provisional Program") (Exh. EV-1, at 2). In D.P.U. 20-75-B, the Department established a new provisional framework for planning and funding essential upgrades to the regional grid. The provisional framework allows the electric distribution companies to file capital investment project ("CIP") proposals with the Department.

These proposals allocate the costs to upgrade the electric power system in specific geographic areas between Eversource ratepayers and certain owners of distributed energy resources ("DER") to increase clean energy infrastructure in support of Massachusetts' energy and climate policies. Under the provisional design, ratepayers help fund the initial construction of these upgrades. Ratepayers will be refunded a portion of these costs over time from fees charged to owners of future DER facilities that are able to interconnect due to the CIP upgrades. See D.P.U 20-75-B.[4]

The Project is subject to the Department's Provisional Program as a CIP. A CIP is defined as "a project proposed for cost recovery by a[n Electric] Distribution Company under the proposed distribution system planning process for the assessment of the interconnection and integration of distributed generation projects…" D.P.U. 20-75, Att. at 1. The Department clarified the definition by adding that CIPs "may include but are not necessarily limited to: (1) substation transformer replacements; (2) reconductoring of distribution feeders; (3) distribution protection measures; and (4) transmission related upgrades triggered by resources interconnecting to the distribution system." D.P.U. 20-75, Att. at 5 n.2.

The Department approved the Plymouth CIP (which included the Project), subject to certain modifications, in the Plymouth Order (Exh. EV-1, at 3). To construct and operate the Plymouth and Cape Cod CIP with the project design reviewed and approved by the Department, the Company filed its petition with the Siting Board pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3, for individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions necessary for the construction and operation of the proposed Project (Exh. EV-1, at 4-5).

On July 11, 2025, the Siting Board issued a Notice of Adjudication and Public Comment Hearings ("Notice") establishing dates for two hybrid public comment hearings, and dates for filing comments and petitions to intervene or participate in this docket. As directed, the Company published the Notice once a week for two consecutive weeks prior to the public comment hearings in the following newspapers: (1) *The Brockton Enterprise,* and (2) *Old Colony Memorial*. The Company also provided the Notice to the Clerks Offices and Public Library Branches for both

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[4] Additional details related to the CIP program and the Department's review of the filings for Plymouth and Wareham (Cape Cod) are available at the Department's webpage: Provisional System Planning Program Guide | Mass.gov.

Plymouth and Wareham. As directed by the Presiding Officer, the Company mailed a copy of the Notice to all property owners and U.S. Mail addresses within one-quarter mile of the property lines of the parcels containing the West Pond Substation and the Tremont Substation (including areas of Substation Expansions). The Siting Board held one hybrid public comment hearing in Plymouth and one in Wareham, both on August 5, 2025. The Siting Board did not receive any petitions to intervene or participate as a limited participant.

The Siting Board conducted a single evidentiary hearing on January 22, 2026. The Company presented a total of eight witnesses for cross examination by Siting Board staff:

- Christopher Lombardi, Eversource project director
- Keith Jones, Eversource principal engineer, Distribution System Planning
- John Zicko, Eversource director of Capital Projects Engineering
- Nick Forzono, Eversource lead engineer
- Patrick Fitzgerald, Eversource engineering manager with Substations Solutions
- James Clancy, Eversource senior environmental specialist
- Maxwell Payeur, Eversource supervisor of project engagement/Southeast Massachusetts
- Jeremy Tremper, Burns & McDonnell, assistant construction manager

Approximately 110 exhibits were entered into the evidentiary record. Eversource filed a brief in support of its zoning petition on February 12, 2026. On September 29, 2026, Siting Board issued supplemental record requests to the Company, which responded on October 6, 2026, and included those responses in the record.

Siting Board staff prepared a Tentative Decision and distributed it on October 19, 2026, to the Siting Board and Eversource. The Siting Board invited written comments on the Tentative Decision by October 26, 2026. [The Company filed timely written comments]. The Siting Board conducted a hybrid Siting Board meeting on [October 28, 2026], during which it heard oral comments, deliberated, and voted on the Tentative Decision. The Siting Board voted to [approve] the Petition, with conditions. The Siting Board directed staff to prepare a Final Decision, as reflected herein.

II. REQUEST FOR ZONING EXEMPTIONS PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 40A, § 3

A. Standard of Review

On November 20, 2024, Governor Maura Healey signed legislation to accelerate progress towards the state's goals of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. An Act Promoting a Clean Energy Grid, Advancing Equity and Protecting Ratepayers, St. 2024, c. 239 ("2024 Climate Act"). The 2024 Climate Act became effective February 18, 2025, and modified local zoning exemption authority in two respects: (1) it codified the definition of "public service corporation," St. 2024, c. 239, § 36; and (2) it moved the authority to grant zoning exemptions from the Department to the Siting Board. St. 2024, c. 239, § 37, 91.[5]

The legislative provisions pertaining to the Siting Board's zoning exemption authority are found in G.L. c. 40A, § 3, which states in relevant part:

> Land or structures used, or to be used by a public service corporation may be exempted in particular respects from the operation of a zoning ordinance or bylaw if, upon petition of the corporation, the [Siting Board] shall, after notice given pursuant to section eleven and public hearing in the town or city, determine the exemptions required and find that the present or proposed use of the land or structure is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public …

G.L. c. 40A, § 3.

Thus, a petitioner seeking exemption from a local zoning ordinance under G.L. c. 40A, § 3 must meet three criteria. First, the petitioner must qualify as a public service corporation. See Hingham Municipal Light Plant, EFSB 24-01/D.P.U. 24-135, at 81 (2026) ("HMLP"); NSTAR

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[5] On November 20, 2024, Governor Healey signed into law An Act Promoting a Clean Energy Grid, Advancing Equity and Protecting Ratepayers, St. 2024, c. 239 ("2024 Climate Act" or the "Act"). The 2024 Climate Act establishes a consolidated permit program, including authority under G.L. c. 164, § 69T, for the Siting Board to issue state and local permits for large clean energy infrastructure facilities, and for smaller projects under more limited circumstances. The 2024 Climate Act also includes various statutory Siting Board mandates to implement Act. G.L. c. 164, § 69H. The 2024 Climate Act indicates that "regulations shall apply to all jurisdictional projects submitted to the [Siting Board] on and after July 1, 2026." St. 2024, c. 239, §132. On February 27, 2026, the Siting Board promulgated regulations implementing many of the provisions of the 2024 Climate Act; those regulations apply to proceedings, initiated July 1, 2026, and afterwards. Therefore, this proceeding is governed by rules in place before the effective date of the 2024 Climate Act provisions and related rules.

Electric d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 25-03/D.P.U. 24-93/24-94, at 12 (2026) ("Crystal Spring"); Park City Wind, LLC, EFSB 20-0/D.P.U. 20-56/20-57, at 169 (2023) ("Park City Wind"). Save the Bay, Inc. v. Department of Public Utilities, 366 Mass. 667 (1975) ("Save the Bay"). Second, the petitioner must demonstrate that its present or proposed use of the land or structure is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare. HMLP at 81; Crystal Spring at 12; Park City Wind at 169. Finally, the petitioner must establish that it requires exemption from the zoning ordinance or bylaw. HMLP at 81; Crystal Spring at 12; NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U. 17-147, at 8-9 (2019) ("K Street Substation").

The Siting Board favors the resolution of local issues on a local level whenever possible to reduce concern regarding any intrusion on home rule. The Siting Board has determined that the most effective approach is for a petitioner to consult with local officials regarding its project before seeking zoning exemptions pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3. HMLP at 81; Crystal Spring at 12; NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 19-06A/D.P.U. 19-142A/19-143A/23-22, at 77 (2025) ("Mid-Cape Project Change"). Thus, the Siting Board encourages petitioners to consult with local officials and, in some circumstances, to apply for local zoning permits, before seeking zoning exemptions from the Siting Board under G.L. c. 40A, § 3. HMLP at 81; Crystal Spring at 12; Mid-Cape Project Change at 77.

B. Public Service Corporation Status

1. Standard of Review

Previously, the Siting Board based its standard of review for public service corporation status on analysis provided by the Supreme Judicial Court. Save the Bay, 366 Mass. at 680; NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 17-02/D.P.U. 17-82/17-83, at 194 (2019) ("Sudbury-Hudson"); Berkshire Power Development, Inc., D.P.U. 96-104, at 26-36 (1997) ("Berkshire Power"). The 2024 Climate Act codified the definition of "public service corporation" to include:

> a corporation or other entity duly qualified to conduct business in the commonwealth that owns or operates or proposes to own or operate assets or facilities to provide electricity, gas, telecommunications, cable, water or other similar services of public need or convenience to the public directly or indirectly, including, but not limited to, an entity that owns or operates or proposes to own or

> operate electricity generation, storage, transmission or distribution facilities, or natural gas facilities including pipelines, and manufacturing and storage facilities…

St. 2024, c. 239, § 36; G.L. c. 40A, §1A

2. Company Position

Eversource has its principal place of business at 800 Boylston Street, 17th Floor, in Boston. Eversource is an electric company as defined in G.L. c. 164, § 1 and, therefore, is a public service corporation authorized for the purposes of G.L. c. 40A, § 3. See Sudbury-Hudson at 194 (2019); NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 19-06/D.P.U. 19-142/19-143, at 99-100 (2022) ("Mid-Cape Reliability Project"); NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U.18-155, at 11 (2020) ("Oak Bluffs ESS").

3. Analysis and Finding

An entity requesting a zoning exemption must establish that it is a public service corporation. The term "public service corporation" is defined by the 2024 Climate Act. St. 2024, c. 239, § 36. Consistent with this definition, Eversource qualifies as a public service corporation pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 1A, and is eligible to request a zoning exemption from the Siting Board.

C. Public Convenience and Welfare

1. Standard of Review

In determining whether the present or proposed use is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare, the Siting Board must balance the interests of the general public against the local interest. Save the Bay, 366 Mass. at 680; Town of Truro v. Department of Public Utilities, 365 Mass. 407, 409 (1974) ("Town of Truro"). Specifically, the Siting Board is empowered and required to undertake "a broad and balanced consideration of all aspects of the general public interest and welfare and not merely [make an] examination of the local and individual interests which might be affected." New York Central Railroad v. Department of Public Utilities, 347 Mass. 586, 592 (1964) ("NY Central Railroad"); K Street Substation at 7; Hopkinton LNG, D.P.U. 17-114, at 10 (2018) ("Hopkinton LNG"). When reviewing a petition for a zoning exemption under G.L. c. 40A, § 3, the Siting Board is empowered and required to consider the

public effects of the requested exemption in Massachusetts as a whole and upon the territory served by the applicant. Save the Bay, 366 Mass at 685; NY Central Railroad, 347 Mass. at 592.

With respect to the site chosen by a petitioner, G.L. c. 40A, § 3 does not require the petitioner to demonstrate that its preferred site is the best possible alternative, nor does the statute require the Siting Board to consider and reject every possible alternative site presented. Rather, the availability of alternative sites, the efforts necessary to secure them, and the relative advantages and disadvantages of those sites are matters of fact bearing solely upon the main issue of whether the preferred site is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public. Martorano v. Department of Public Utilities, 401 Mass. 257, 265 (1987) ("Martorano"); NY Central Railroad, 347 Mass. at 591; K Street Substation at 7.

Therefore, when making a determination as to whether a petitioner's present or proposed use is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare, the Siting Board examines (1) the need for, or public benefits of, the present or proposed use; (2) the present or proposed use and any alternatives or alternative sites identified; and (3) the environmental impacts or any other impacts of the present or proposed use. The Siting Board then balances the interests of the general public against the local interest and determines whether the present or proposed use of the land or structures is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public. Park City Wind at 175; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 100-101; Sudbury-Hudson at 195.

2. Need or Public Benefit of Use

a. Company Description

i. Existing Transmission and Distribution System

According to Eversource, seven substations (collectively, the "Plymouth Group Substations") supply approximately 67,400 customers in the Plymouth Group Study Area, which covers roughly 236 square miles, including all or parts of the Towns of Plymouth, Carver, Wareham, Rochester, Marion, Bourne, Sandwich, Plympton, and Kingston (Exh. EV-1, at 16, 34). The Plymouth Group Substations all tie into each other at the 23 kV distribution level and provide distribution backup in the event of contingencies (Exh. EV-1, at 16-17). The Plymouth Group

Substations collectively serve 229 megawatts ("MW") of native customer[6] peak load and are connected to 202 MW of installed ground-mounted large DER and 35 MW of small DER (Exh. EV-1, at 17).[7] The Plymouth Group Substations are listed as follows and shown with the towns they serve in Figure 3 below:

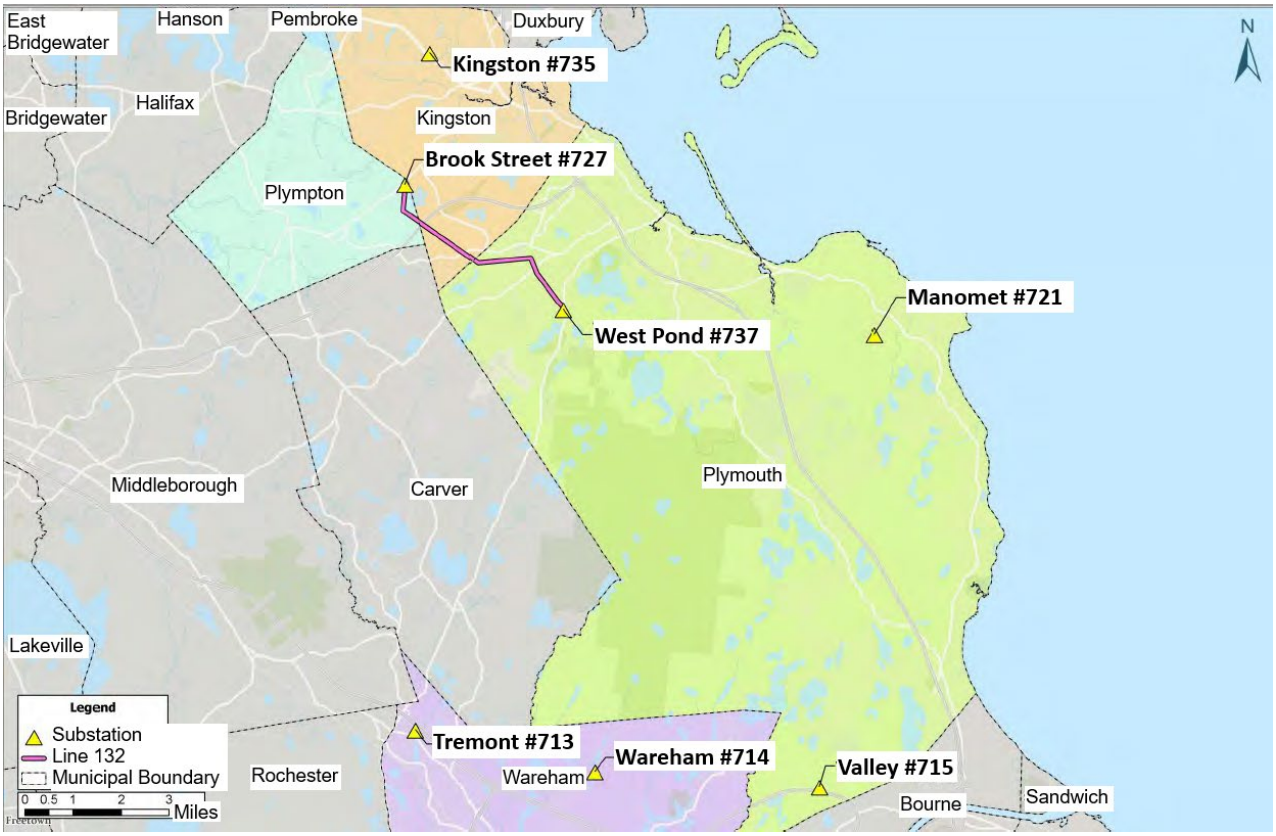
- West Pond Substation #737 in Plymouth
- Tremont Substation #713 in Wareham
- Wareham Substation #714 in Wareham
- Valley Substation #715 in Plymouth
- Manomet Substation #721 in Plymouth
- Kingston Substation #735 in Kingston
- Brook Street Substation #727 in Plympton

Source: Exh. EV-1, at 16.

6 The Company identified native customers as wholesale and retail power customers distinguished from interconnecting DER facilities (Exh. EV-1, at 17, n.10).

7 The Company distinguished large and small DER facilities as those larger and smaller than 15kW, respectively (Exh. EV-1, at 17). Small DER facilities include roof-mounted solar panels (Exh. EV-1, at 17).

Figure 3. Plymouth Group Substations and Service Area



Source: Exh. EV-1, at 26. Modified by staff for legibility.

(A) West Pond Substation

The West Pond Substation serves approximately 18,200 customers in parts of the Towns of Plymouth, Carver, Plympton, and Kingston (Exh. EV-1, at 17). West Pond Substation currently consists of two 115/23 kV step-down transformers each with a nameplate power rating of 56 MVA, providing a total capacity of 112 MVA, with firm capability of 66 MA[8], and load carrying

[8] The Company stated that each transformer is capable of operating temporarily at a higher long-term emergency ("LTE") rating during an emergency such as the loss of one transformer, resulting in a firm capacity greater than the nameplate rating of the remaining transformer (RR-EFSB-5).

capacity ("LCC") of 87 MVA[9] (Exh. EV-1 at 17; RR-EFSB-5). The Company stated that actual peak load at West Pond Substation in 2024 was 63 MVA, which was 95 percent of the station's total firm capability (Exh. EV-1 at 18).

(B) Tremont Substation

Tremont Substation serves approximately 7,400 customers in parts of the Towns of Wareham, Carver, and Marion (Exh. EV-1, at 18). According to the Company, the Tremont Substation currently consists of two 55-year-old 115/23 kV transformers with a total capacity of 50.4 MVA, firm capability of 23.0 MVA, and LCC of 44.6 MVA, which includes the firm capability plus 21.6 MVA of transfer capability (RR-EFSB-5; Exh. EV-1, at 18). Actual peak load at Tremont Substation in 2024 was 21.6 MVA, which was 94 percent of the substation's firm capability (Exh. EV-1, at 18).

ii. Provisional Program and the Plymouth Order

Eversource proposed the Project pursuant to the Provisional Program, a framework established by the Department in 2021 for planning and funding upgrades to the electric power system ("EPS") and supporting timely and cost-effective development and interconnection of DER, particularly in light of the high cost of interconnection (Exh. EV-1, at 2). According to the Company, the Provisional Program allows electric distribution companies to file certain EPS infrastructure upgrade proposals with the Department that limit the costs charged to interconnect DER facilities by splitting such costs between the DER facilities and ratepayers of the electric distribution company (Exh. EV-1, at 2). See Plymouth Order at 68, 121-122. The Department directed the electric distribution companies ("EDCs") to submit CIP proposals that can be completed within a maximum of four years from the conclusion of the Department's adjudicatory process (Exh. EV-1, at 2-3). Provisional Program at 39.

In the Plymouth Order, the Department found that the Plymouth CIP has potential benefits for distribution customers and to the Commonwealth as a whole, enhancing reliability for

[9] The 87 MVA LCC is the sum of the station's firm capability of 66 MVA plus 21 MVA of transfer capability using distribution level connections (Exh. EV-1, at 18; RR-EFSB-5).

distribution customers in addition to enabling more DER projects in the Plymouth Group Study Area (Exh. EV-1, at 3-4). Plymouth Order at 121-122. The Department also found that the proposed allocation of costs of the upgrades between large interconnecting DER customers and the Company's distribution customers to be equitable (Exh. EV-1, at 3-4). Plymouth Order at 68, 121-122. The Company designed Plymouth Group Upgrades, which includes this Project and other upgrades and additions to Eversource's EPS, to implement the approved Plymouth CIP (Exh. EV-1, at 3). The Company estimated it would take approximately 24 months to complete Project construction once it commences (Exh. EV-1, at 4-5).

iii. Planning and Engineering Standards

Eversource stated that it must operate its transmission and distribution systems in compliance with applicable planning and engineering standards (Exh. EV-1 at 18; Company Brief at 15-16). For providers of the bulk power transmission system, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC"), North American Electric Reliability Corporation ("NERC"), Northeast Power Coordinating Council ("NPCC") and ISO-NE require designing, testing, and operating transmission system to withstand representative contingencies, as well as planning and implementing system additions and upgrades to address identified inadequacies (Exh. EV-1, at 19-20). According to the Company, these standards provide limits for voltages and loading to prevent risk of transmission equipment overload and unacceptable voltage levels under certain system conditions (Company Brief at 19-20, citing Exh. EV-1, at 19-20).

The Company stated that its own Transmission System Design and Analysis Guideline ("TSDAG") is consistent with the above standards and requirements in addressing N-1 and N-1-1 contingencies (Exh. EV-1, at 20).[10] The Company has also established its own Bulk Distribution Substation Assessment Procedure, known as SYSPLAN 010, to set reliability criteria for designing, testing, and operating its distribution system (Exhs. EV-1, at 20; EV-1(J)). The

[10] An N-1 contingency refers to the loss of a single transmission element, such as a substation transformer (Exh. EV-1, at 17, n.12). An N-1-1 contingency is a second contingency following the N-1 contingency, such the loss of a second transformer in the same substation (Exh. EV-1, at 20).

Company developed a Distribution System Planning Guide ("DSPG") to outline the planning criteria, design and analysis methods, and engineering rationale for expanding its distribution system to meet demand while complying with the reliability criteria for bulk substation equipment and substation distribution tie-lines (Exhs. EV-1, at 20-21).

Besides transmission and distribution standards, the Company must also comply with its tariff, "Standards for Interconnection of Distributed Generation", M.D.P.U. No. 55A ("DER Interconnection Tariff"), which sets forth the process and requirements for the safe and reliable interconnection of DER projects into the Company's EPS (Exh. EV-1, at 21). In accordance with the tariff, the Company developed a Distributed Energy Resources Planning Guide ("DERPG") that describes planning criteria and analyses used to study the impacts of DER seeking to interconnect to the Company's EPS (Exhs. EV-1, at 21; EV-1(K)).

iv. Plymouth Group Study

(A) Plymouth Group Study Phase 1

The Company noted that the Plymouth Group Substations are highly saturated with DER (Exh. EV-1, at 23). In accordance with the Provisional Program, the Company analyzed system constraints, necessary upgrades, and impacts in the Plymouth Group Study Area with additional interconnecting DER to or between any of the Plymouth Group Substations (referred to as Plymouth Group Study Phase 1) (Exh. EV-1, at 22-23). The Company explained that it must analyze substations as a group for applications in areas of medium-to-high DER saturation (Exh.EV-1, at 22). The Company noted that the primary focus of the Plymouth Group Study was to evaluate the expected impacts of DER on the system's steady state volage and loading, voltage flicker, and fault current contribution, as well as assessing the risk of potential problems in the event of islanding conditions (Exh. EV-1, at 23). Since conducting the Phase 1 Study, the Company conducted a second-round Plymouth Group Study Phase 2 and received additional interconnection requests awaiting further study behind Phase 1 and Phase 2 (Exh. EFSB-N-3).

Table 4 below shows the number of DER projects and associated MW studied for Tremont and West Pond Substations in Plymouth Group Study Phase 1.

Table 4. Plymouth Group Study Phase 1 DER Projects for Tremont and West Pond Substations

Substation	Number of DER Projects Studied	Total MW Studied
Tremont	12	31
West Pond	14	33.3
Total	**26**	**64.3**

Source: Exh. EFSB-N-3(S1)(1).

While 33 MW and 31 MW of DER projects had applied to be interconnected to the West Pond Substation and Tremont Substation, respectively, the Company indicated that neither has any available bulk substation hosting capacity, which is the amount of DER a substation can accommodate when one of the transformers at the substation is off-line (Exh. EV-1, at 23-24).[11] The Plymouth Group Study Phase 1 determined such interconnections infeasible without constructing the necessary upgrades (Exhs. EV-1, at 24; EFSB-N-2).[12] The Company also noted that the existing DER connected to Tremont Substation already exceeded the substation's capacity (Exh. EV-1, at 24). For the same reason, the Company would not interconnect additional DER projects in-queue behind the Plymouth Group Study Phase 1 (Exh. EV-1, at 24).

The Plymouth Group Study Phase 1 considered the ability for Tremont and West Pond Substations to transfer load to other Plymouth Group Substations via distribution tie-lines during contingency outages but determined that the other substations could not back up Tremont and West Pond Substations' existing and proposed DER due to a potential for mutual thermal steady state voltage, voltage flicker, islanding, and transient overvoltage ("TOV") constraints, which could lead to unreliable or unsafe operation of the EPS (Exh. EV-1, at 26-27). Without the Project and associated new distribution feeders, the Company maintains that its planning standards would be violated and there would be service quality impacts in the event of certain contingency outages

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11 The Company reported that Wareham Substation, another one of the seven Plymouth Group Substations, also has zero MW of available bulk substation housing capacity (Exh. EV-1, at 20).

12 For all Plymouth Group Substations, the Plymouth Group Study Phase 1 DER consisted of 37 DER projects, with a total of 117 MW (Exh. EV-1, at 20, n.10). Plymouth Order at 13.

(Company Brief at 25; Exh. EFSB-N-2; EV-1, at 28-29).[13] The Company explained that such violations may cause prolonged outages for connected DER ranging from several hours to several days (Exhs. EFSB-N-2; EV-1, at 28-29). Furthermore, the Company stated that, without the Project, DER interconnections would cause other reliability issues for the individual lines in the Plymouth Study Group, including reverse flow through substation transformers not equipped for such operation, system islanding, and various voltage issues (Exh. EFSB-N-2).

(B) Updates to Plymouth Group Study Phase 1

Following issuance of the Plymouth Order, certain projects in the Plymouth Group Study Phase 1 withdrew from the interconnection queue, as shown in Table 5 below (Exh. EV-1, at 24-25).[14] Nevertheless, the Company maintained this modest attrition did not diminish the need for the Substation Expansions (Exhs. EV-1, at 24-25; EFSB-N-3). In fact, as shown in Table 6 below, the Company noted that the number of DER projects seeking interconnection and their associated MW at the West Pond and Tremont Substations had increased since the completion of Plymouth Group Study Phase 1 (Exhs. EFSB-N-3; EFSB-N-3(1); RR-EFSB-9; Tr. 1, at 30-31). The Company attributed the strong DER interest in the Plymouth Group Area, and particularly in the area served by the West Pond and Tremont Substations, despite changes in the federal tax credit programs, the availability of open land, availability of agricultural land with DER collocation opportunities, and relatively low land prices (Tr. 1, at 30-31, 34-36).

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[13] Contingencies evaluated in the Plymouth Group Study include feeder N-1 and substation N-1 outages (Exh. EV-1, at 27-28; EFSB-PA-1(1) at 21-26).

[14] The Company noted the withdrawals reflect typical queue dynamics, as developers reassess project viability and commercial timelines (Exh. EFSB-N-3).

Table 5. Plymouth Group Study Phase 1 DER Projects for Tremont and West Pond Substations, Updated

Substation	Number of Projects Studied	Total MW Studied	Projects Withdrawn	Total MW Withdrawn/ Downsized*	Projects Active	Total MW Active as of July 2025*
Tremont	12	31	8	23.5^	4	7.5
West Pond	14	33.3	5	14.3	9	19
Total	**26**	**64.3**	**13**	**40.8**	**13**	**26.5**

* The Company submitted more up-to-date data. See footnote[15]

^ Typo corrected by staff

Source: RR-EFSB-9.

Table 6. Plymouth Group Study Phase 2 and Additional DER Projects for Tremont and West Pond Substations

Substation	Phase 2 Number of Projects	Phase 2 Total MW	Phase 1&2 Total Number of Projects	Phase 1&2 Total MW	MW in queue behind Phase 1&2*	Total MW seeking inter-connection as of July 2025*
Tremont	9	33.9	13	41.4	11	52.4
West Pond	18	60.8	27	79.8	24	103.8
Total	**27**	**94.7**	**40**	**121.2**	**35**	**156.2**

* The Company submitted more up-to-date data. See footnote.[16]

Source: RR-EFSB-9.

15 The Company submitted more up-to-date data on DER project withdrawals on October 13, 2026, showing the additional withdrawal of, across Phases 1 & 2 and in queue thereafter, a total of 37.8 MW of DER projects seeking interconnection, of which, 6 MW is associated with Tremont Substation and 31.8 MW with West Pond Substation (Exh. EFSB-N-3(S1)(1).

16 See previous footnote for changes in DER project withdrawals between July 2025 and October 2026.

The Company noted that, since the Plymouth Group Study Phase 1, there had been 103.8MW of DER projects either online or requesting interconnection to West Pond Substation, which is approximately 160 percent of the 66 MVA firm capacity of the West Pond Substation (RR-EFSB-5; RR-EFSB-9). Similarly, the Company stated that there had been a total of 52.4 MW of DER projects either online or requesting interconnection to Tremont Substation, which was more than double the 23.0 MVA firm capacity of the substation (RR-EFSB-5; RR-EFSB-9).

v. Additional Project Benefits

Besides enabling proposed and future DER facilities, the Company stated the Project also provides a solution to future load growth in the Plymouth Group Study Area and will assist in maintaining a reliable electric system (Exh. EV-1, at 19). The Company contends, for example, that new distribution lines included in the Project will result in reducing the number of electric customers on individual distribution circuits, thereby reducing the number of electric customers affected by a feeder or line outage (Exh. EV-1, at 30-31). Moreover, the Company has confirmed that, under current conditions, DER already connected to the Company's EPS would be lost under certain contingencies (Exh. EV-1, at 28). Thus, the Company contends that Project is needed not only to enable future interconnection of DER, but to maintain DER already connected to the system (Exh. EV-1, at 25).

The Company developed a ten-year load forecast for both West Pond and Tremont Substations, as shown in Table 7 below (Exh. EV-1 at 17-18). The Company stated that the firm capacity of each expanded substation would exceed the respective ten-year load forecast with significant margin and the capacity increase would enable future electrification and DER growth (RR-EFSB-5).

Table 7. West Pond and Tremont Substations Load Forecast, Assuming Summer Conditions with 90/10 Extreme Weather (in MW per year except where specified)

Substation	Current Firm Capacity (MVA)*	2024 (Actual in MW)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	Firm Capacity Enabled by the Project (MVA)*
West Pond	66	63.0	67.5	67.7	68.0	68.5	69.0	69.6	70.3	71.1	72.2	164
Tremont	23.0	21.6	28.8	28.8	28.9	29.0	29.1	29.3	29.4	29.7	30.0	164

* MVA = MW ÷ power factor (typically close to 1)

Source: Exh. EV-1, at 18, Table 2 and Table 3; RR-EFSB-5.

The Company noted that electrification is needed to achieve the Commonwealth's 2050 Decarbonization Goals (Exh. EV-1, at 30). The Company also estimated that the Plymouth Group Upgrades would facilitate, on an annual basis, an increase in generating capacity from 337 gigawatt-hours ("GWh") of energy to 892 GWh of energy from renewable resources within the Plymouth Group Study Area (Exh. EV-1, at 31).

In the Plymouth Group Study, the Company also determined that there are multiple 23 kV distribution capacity and voltage issues (Exh. EV-1, at 25). Under certain specific N-1 contingencies, the Company would experience residual load loss in the Plymouth area, which would violate the Company's SYSPLAN 010 requirement that no single transmission contingency event should result in the loss of customer load (Exh. EV-1, at 25). SYSPLAN 010 also prohibits customer load losses in the event of a coincident loss of transformers and requires service to all customer load after the operation of automatic restoral systems or the use of distribution automation capability (Exh EV-1, at 25).

The Company anticipates that the Project and other components of the Plymouth Group Upgrades would improve system reliability for all existing and future customers (Exh. EV-1, at 30). In addition, the Company stated that the Plymouth Group Upgrades would result in both electric system reliability improvements and the amount of energy served from renewable sources for several environmental justice ("EJ") Populations in the Plymouth Group Study Area, totaling approximately 21,989 EJ Population customers (Exh. EV-1, at 31). In consideration of the need to interconnect DER resources and maintain reliability of the EPS in the Plymouth Group Study Area, the Company argued that the Project is reasonably necessary for the benefit of the public

convenience and welfare (Company Brief at 28, citing Exhs. EV-1, at 31; EFSB-G-9). Furthermore, the Company argues that, by supporting the interconnection of DER, the Project provides a reliable, resilient and clear supply of energy consistent with the Commonwealth's climate change and greenhouse gas reduction policies and requirements (Company Brief at 69-70).

b. Analysis and Findings

The Department established the Provisional Program in part to further the Commonwealth's decarbonization objectives consistent with the Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap. Provisional Program at 1 and 17, n.24. Under this program, an electric distribution company files a proposal for CIPs funded by both the interconnecting DER facilities and all ratepayers of the electric distribution company. Provisional Program at 2, 8, and 33-34. With the Provisional Program, the Department also recognized the immediate risk that hundreds of MWs of DER projects awaiting interconnection would be unlikely to proceed without costly upgrades to the electric power system, and that construction timelines were critical to these projects. Provisional Program at 38-39.

The record shows Eversource filed the Plymouth CIP with the Department, pursuant to the Provisional Program, and that the Department approved the CIP in the Plymouth Order. The Department found that the Plymouth CIP would benefit distribution customers and the Commonwealth, enable interconnection of more DER projects in the Plymouth Group Study Area, and enhance reliability for distribution customers. The record also shows the Department approved a cost recovery mechanism that splits the distribution costs of the Plymouth CIP between DER applicants and distribution customers.

Furthermore, the record shows the Plymouth Group Study Area is saturated with DER projects; both Tremont and West Pond Substations have zero MW of available additional bulk substation hosting capacity for new DER projects. On the other hand, Eversource's open interconnection request queue for the Plymouth Group Study Area has been growing. The record shows the Project would allow Eversource to interconnect the Group Study DER projects in compliance with the transmission, distribution, and interconnection standards and, in case of certain contingencies such as N-1, avoid degradation of service quality to all customers, damage to

Eversource's EPS equipment, and prolonged outages for connected DER. Moreover, the Project would also remedy existing criteria violations at the Tremont Substation, where existing connected DER, inconsistent with Eversource's emphasis on electric system standards, already exceed the substation's capacity.

The record reflects that the Project would provide additional Project benefits, including supporting future load growth due to electrification and increasing the amount of potential electricity served by renewable sources in the Plymouth Group Study Area. Accordingly, the Siting Board finds the Company has demonstrated the Project is needed and would result in public benefits.

3. Alternative Approaches Explored

a. Company Description

The Company considered and evaluated solutions to address the need discussed above (Exh. EV-1, at 31). The Company emphasized that the solutions must be technically viable, as well as conducive to balancing reliability, cost, and environmental impact (Exh. EV-1, at 31). Through an iterative process, the Company developed several alternative solutions consisting of varying sets of design changes, and technology and equipment applications (Exh. EV-1, at 31-32).

i. Plymouth Group Upgrades (Including the Project)

The Plymouth Group Upgrades consist of the Project, transmission Line 132 upgrades including reconductoring between Brook Street and West Pond Substations, the replacement of one 50 MVA transformer with a new 75 MVA transformer at Wareham Substation, and distribution line upgrades and expansions linked to six substations (Exh. EV-1, at 32; RR-EFSB-7).[17] Eversource indicated that it planned to deploy and integrate certain advanced transmission technologies and grid enhancement technologies as part of this Project (Tr. 1, at 15-

[17] The Company described distribution line upgrades and other substation expansions linked to both the West Pond and Tremont Substation Expansion, but clarified that none of these activities, nor the transmission Line 132 upgrades, are a direct part of the Project and do not require the requested zoning exemptions (RR-EFSB-7).

18). These include: (1) volt/volt-amp reactive optimization (a grid management strategy to control voltage levels, improve distribution efficiency, reduce energy consumption, minimize power losses, and maintain voltages within allowable limits); and (2) distributed energy resource management systems ("DERMS"), a control-room tool to manage, monitor, and dispatch DER with the objective to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of DER integration, as well as enable the use of DER as a grid asset (Tr. 1, at 16-18).

ii. No-Build Alternative

The Company indicated that a "no-build" alternative would not increase hosting capacity for the Plymouth Group Substations and therefore would not allow the Company to connect the Group Study DER nor enable the Company to reliably meet demand in the event of certain contingencies (Exh. EV-1, at 33). Accordingly, the Company dismissed this approach from further consideration (Exh. EV-1, at 33).

iii. Non-Wires Alternatives

Non-wires alternatives ("NWAs") may involve a combination of energy efficiency and demand response programs, new DER, and new energy storage facilities to reduce load and allow an increasing number of electric customers to be served with the existing infrastructure (Exh. EV-1, at 33). The Company indicated that while NWAs may be effective when the underlying need for a project is driven by increasing customer load levels, NWAs would be ineffective when the underlying need is driven by reliability requirements for DER interconnection (Exh. EV-1, at 33). As described above, the Plymouth Group Study Area does not have sufficient system hosting capacity to interconnect the Group Study DER, requiring substantial substation and distribution upgrades—more than NWAs could provide (Exh. EV-1, at 33). Accordingly, the Company stated that NWAs would not meet the identified need and eliminated them from further consideration (Company Brief at 30-31, citing Exh. EV-1, at 33-34).

iv. New Substation Alternative

The Company evaluated the construction of a new 115/23 kV bulk distribution substation at a new location to interconnect some of the Group Study DER but determined it is not a viable

alternative (Exh. EV-1, at 34). The Company stated there is no single viable potential location for a new substation to connect each of the Group Study DER projects due to the geographic dispersion of the Plymouth Group Study Area and the disparate locations of the 39 DER projects in the queue (Exh. EV-1, at 34). Moreover, this alternative would not fully replace the complete package of upgrades required for Tremont Substation and Wareham Substation and would involve land acquisition and additional permitting in comparison to that for the Project (Exh. EV-1, at 34). Finally, the Company stated that developing a new site rather than upgrading and expanding existing substations would cost more due to the need for land acquisition and likely have more environmental impacts (Exh. EV-1, at 34). For these reasons, the Company did not investigate this alternative further (Company Brief at 31, citing Exh. EV-1, at 34).

Consequently, the Company concluded that the Plymouth Group Upgrades are the only cost-effective combination of alternatives that would effectuate the substation and distribution capacity increases (Company Brief at 31-32, citing Exh. EV-1, at 35).

b. Analysis and Findings on Alternative Approaches

The record shows that a no-build alternative would not address the identified need, particularly the need to increase the hosting capacity for the Plymouth Group substations. The record also shows that NWAs would not address the fundamental need for additional hosting capacity to facilitate additional DER installations in the Plymouth area, nor provide a sufficient improvement in system reliability. In addition, the record shows constructing a new substation would fail to fully address the Project need while incurring additional costs and environmental impacts relative to the Plymouth Group Upgrades. Although the Company did not develop a standalone alternative relying on advanced transmission technologies and grid enhancement technologies, the record shows the Company would deploy these technologies as part of the Project. The Siting Board strongly encourages the Company to explore and continue to apply these technologies wherever possible. The Siting Board finds that the Company considered alternatives to the Project and the Project is superior to those alternatives.

4. Impacts of the Proposed Use

a. General Description of Project Construction

i. Construction Sequence

According to Eversource, prior to the start of construction, its contractor would identify a location near each Substation Expansion site to establish a marshaling/storage yard that would accommodate temporary offices, sanitation facilities, dumpsters, and containers (Exh. EV-1, at 37-38). Following mobilization, the Company would install biodegradable erosion and sediment controls in accordance with Eversource's best management practice ("BMP") Manual and applicable environmental permit requirements (Exh. EV-1, at 38).

Next, the Company would perform site clearing and preparation including construction of staging and laydown areas, and gravel access road construction, followed by expansion of each substation fence (Exh. EV-1, at 36-37). Then, the Company would proceed with construction, installation, replacement, and demolition of electrical equipment at each substation (Exh. EV-1, at 36-37). The Company stated that construction of the West Pond Substation Expansion may involve installation of a temporary mobile transformer for system reliability (Exh. EV-1, at 36). Once the construction of electrical equipment is completed, the Company would perform site stabilization and site restoration (Exh. EV-1, at 36-37).

The Company stated that it would construct the Project in full compliance with the National Electrical Safety Code ("NESC"), standards of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers and the American Standards Institute, good utility practice, and in accordance with the Company's specifications, BMPs, final engineering plans, and the conditions specified in permits and approvals obtained for the projects (Exh. EV-1, at 35-38). The Company stated that qualified individuals would conduct environmental compliance monitoring during and following Project construction to ensure that appropriate construction methods are employed, and that the Project complies with applicable regulatory requirements (Exh. EV-1, at 38). Moreover, the Company would require its contractor to implement a site-specific construction safety plan (Exh. EV-1, at 70-71).

ii. Construction Schedule and Duration

The Company anticipated the Project would require approximately 24 months to complete construction (Exh. EV-1, at 35). The Company proposed construction hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays (Exh. EV-1, at 35). The Company stated that these hours are consistent with the Plymouth Zoning Bylaws and Wareham Zoning Bylaws, except for the more stringent hour restrictions imposed on excavation and related activities under Plymouth Zoning Bylaws Section 203-2C.4.vii (Exhs. EV-1, at 35; EFSB-G-4; RR-EFSB-2).[18] The Company requested a zoning exemption for the entire Sections 203-2B and 203-2C (RR-EFSB-2). See Section II.D.4 for discussion on the exemption request.

In limited circumstances, the Company noted some work tasks once started would require continuous operation until completion and may need to be completed outside of normal working hours (Exh. EV-1, at 35). The Company would provide notification to the Towns should the need for continuous operation and extended work hours arise (Exh. EV-1, at 35).

iii. Outreach Plan

Eversource prepared a detailed outreach plan specific to the Project (Exhs. EV-1, at 10; EV-1(I)). The Company would continue its ongoing outreach in both Plymouth and Wareham, and maintain a focused community program throughout construction, including coordinating construction staging and laydown, and traffic management plans with municipal officials and abutters (Exh. EV-1, at 10). With the presence of an EJ population near the Tremont Substation Expansion Site in Wareham, the Company would perform EJ-informed outreach in Wareham, including providing information about energy efficiency and income-based assistance programs (Exh. EV-1, at 11).

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[18] The Company stated that it had initiated communications with the Towns and was confident that work hours mutually agreeable to all parties would be achieved (RR-EFSB-2).

iv. Decommissioning

The Company stated that, generally, substations are long-term investments spanning multiple decades and, therefore, any plans for the substation's end of life would be developed at the time of decommissioning (Exh. EFSB-G-8).[19] The Company explained that it reports planned substation retirements in its Annual Reliability Report ("ARR") filing and provides information about substation decommissioning costs to the Department in its rate case filings (RR-EFSB-3).

b. Project Impacts

i. Land Use and Land-based Resources

(A) Company's Description

(1) West Pond Substation Expansion

According to the Company, the West Pond Substation Expansion Site is bordered to the south and west by significant tree buffers, ranging in width from approximately 200 to 300 feet, and there are residential neighborhoods beyond the tree buffer (Exh. EV-1, at 38). The Company stated that the West Pond Substation Expansion Site is bordered to the north and east by an Eversource transmission corridor, and a tree buffer between the ROW and residential neighborhoods (Exh. EV-1, at 38). The Company described the existing land cover within the West Pond Substation Expansion Site as consisting of grassland, bare ground, and the existing substation (Exh. EV-1, at 38-39). The Company anticipated no permanent changes to abutting land use associated with the construction and operation of the West Pond Substation Expansion, which would be consistent with the existing and surrounding utility infrastructure and current land use (Exh. EV-1, at 39).

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[19] The Company described decommissioning substations as a relatively rare occasion, usually due to limitations on the substation site, e.g., transmission connection capacity constraints, land/space constraints (Tr. 1, at 42-46). The Company intends to replace specific pieces of electrical equipment as needed (Tr. 1, at 50-52). The Company regularly assesses performance and reliability of its infrastructure against load growth, identifying necessary infrastructure projects including any decommissioning of a facility (Tr. 1, at 46-49; 57-59; RR-EFSB-3).

The Company stated that the West Pond Substation Expansion would disturb 3.5 acres of land, including the approximately 0.5 acres of previously developed land occupied by the existing substation facility, and require approximately 0.3 acres of tree removal (Exh. EV-1, at 5, 39). However, the Company indicated that the "minimal" tree removal would not appreciably decrease the tree buffer that exists between the substation and adjacent properties (Exh. EV-1, at 5). According to the Company, the West Pond Substation Expansion grading would involve approximately 1,600 cubic yards of fill and 5,500 cubic yards of cut, totaling a net reduction in soil on-site of approximately 3,000 cubic yards (Exh. EFSB-L-3). The Company stated that it would attempt to balance the net cuts and fills and reuse as much suitable material as possible as fill during construction to minimize earth removal from the West Pond Substation Expansion Site, which would also minimize truck traffic for soil removal and disposal (Exh. EFSB-L-3). The Company noted that land area outside of the disturbed area is and would remain generally occupied by gravel access roads and existing transmission line ROW (Exh. EV-1, at 39).

The Company contracted The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. ("PAL") to perform cultural resource due diligence for the West Pond Substation Expansion Site in December 2024 (Exh. EV-1, at 45). PAL documented existing conditions of the West Pond Substation Expansion Site area and filed a Project Notification Form ("PNF") with the Massachusetts Historical Commission ("MHC") in March 2025 (Exhs. EV-1, at 45; EFSB-L-2). PAL later performed intensive (locational) archeological surveys and submitted surveys to MHC in July 2025 and in August 2025 (Exh. EFSB-L-2). According to the Company, the PNF process is complete as there were no additional comments or concerns from MHC (Exh. EFSB-L-2).

According to the Company, the West Pond Substation Expansion Site is not within any Area of Critical Environmental Concern ("ACEC"), protected open spaces or Article 97 Lands, or Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program ("NHESP") Priority and Estimated Habitat areas (Exh. EV-1, at 45-46; Company Brief at 77).

(2) Tremont Substation Expansion

According to the Company, the Tremont Substation abuts Interstate Route 495 to the north; North Carver Road Extension to the east; and Eversource's fleet vehicle facility and training center

to the south and west, respectively (Exh. EV-1, at 46). The Company described the existing land cover within the site as consisting of impervious surface either under industrial use associated with the existing substation and access road (Exh. EV-1, at 46). The Company anticipated no permanent changes to abutting land use associated with operation of the Tremont Pond Expansion, as well as no interference with any residential, business, or public facilities (Exh. EV-1, at 47).

The Company stated that the Tremont Substation Expansion would disturb approximately 0.2 acres of land in addition to the existing substation facility but no tree removal as part of the site preparation (Exh. EV-1, at 7, 46). According to the Company, the Tremont Substation Expansion grading would involve approximately 1,000 cubic yards of cut and no fill (Exh. EFSB-L-3). As with the grading for the West Pond Substation Expansion, the Company would attempt to minimize earth removal from the Tremont Substation Expansion Site (Exh. EFSB-L-3). The Company also noted that land area outside of the disturbed area is and would remain occupied by paved and gravel access roads (Exh. EV-1, at 46).

The Company contracted PAL to perform cultural resource due diligence for the Tremont Substation Expansion Site in December 2024 (Exh. EV-1, at 50). PAL indicated that the area of the Tremont Substation Expansion has no/low archaeological sensitivity and recommended no further cultural resource investigations (Exh. EV-1, at 50). Nevertheless, in the event of an unanticipated archeological discovery during construction, the Company would stop work, flag or fence off the discovery location and take measures to ensure site security, and direct archaeologists to assess the significance of the archeological resources (Exh. EV-1, at 50). If significant, the Company would notify and work with the State Historic Preservation Officer, MHC, and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer(s) on further evaluations, documentation, and planning (Exh. EV-1, at 50).

According to the Company, the Tremont Substation Expansion Site is not within any ACEC, Protected Open Spaces or Article 97 Lands, NHESP Priority and Estimated Habitat areas (Exh. EV-1, at 50; Company Brief at 77).

(B) Analysis and Findings

(1) West Pond Substation Expansion

The record shows that the West Pond Substation Expansion would be consistent with the current land use associated with utility infrastructure and cause only temporary impacts to abutting property owners. To mitigate temporary impacts, the Company developed and would implement an outreach plan to keep abutters, municipal officials, and community organizations updated on planned construction activities. Although the West Pond Substation Expansion would involve tree removal, the record shows these activities would be relatively limited (0.3 acres) and not cause significant impact to the abutting residences. The Project would also involve earth excavation, which the Company would minimize by reusing as much suitable materials as possible as fill.

The record reflects that MHC identified no concerns regarding impacts on historic and archeological resources from the West Pond Substation Expansion. The record also shows that the West Pond Substation Expansion Site is not within any ACEC, Protected Open Space or Article 97 Lands, or NHESP Priority and Estimated Habitat areas.

(2) Tremont Substation Expansion

The record shows the Tremont Substation Expansion would have largely similar limited impacts on land use and land-based resources as that of the West Pond Substation Expansion, which would be consistent with the current land use associated with utility infrastructure and cause only temporary impacts to abutting property owners. The Tremont Substation Expansion would involve earth excavation but not tree removal. The Company would provide similar mitigation to the temporary land use impacts and earth excavation impacts as for the West Pond Substation Expansion. Similar to the West Pond Substation Expansion, the record shows that MHC identified no concerns regarding impacts on historic and archeological resources from the Tremont Substation Expansion, and the Tremont Substation Expansion Site is not within any ACEC, Protected Open Space or Article 97 Lands, or NHESP Priority and Estimated Habitat areas.

ii. Wetland and Water Resources

(A) Company's Description

(1) West Pond Substation Expansion

The Company stated that there are no wetlands or water resources on or adjacent to the West Pond Substation Expansion Site, nor is the West Pond Substation Expansion Site located within any mapped Flood Zone (Exh. EV-1, at 39-40; Company Brief at 77). However, the Company indicated that the West Pond Substation Expansion Site is located in "Area 3" of the Town's Aquifer Protection Overlay District ("APOD"), which includes recharge areas to recreational water bodies, but is not located in a recharge area to any public water supply wells (Exh. EV-1, at 39).

The Company noted that two activities related to the Project would require a special permit: permanent removal of the existing soil cover that results in a finished grade below a certain height above the historical high groundwater, and application of herbicides (Exh. EV-1, at 54). The Company performed a geotechnical analysis that confirmed the finished grade of the West Pond Substation Expansion Site would provide separation to groundwater comparable to the APOD requirements (Exh. EFSB-Z-2). While the Company is seeking an individual zoning exemption for operation of the APOD requirements (see Section II.D.4), the Company did not expect the substation to have impacts on the aquifer due to said separation to groundwater and the herbicide application protocol described below (Exh. EV-1, at 54-55).

According to the Company, for vegetation control, it contracted licensed companies to periodically apply herbicides, which were approved by Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources ("MDAR") for use near water sources, within and outside of the fences of both substations (Exhs. EFSB-W-1; EFSB-W-2). The Company stated that the herbicide applications would continue after the West Pond Substation Expansion (Exhs. EFSB-W-1; EFSB-W-2). The Company stated that it maintained a five-year vegetation management plan that provides the protocols for herbicide application on its rights-of-ways, which applies an Integrated Vegetation Management ("IVM") approach and incorporates vegetation management industry BMPs (Exhs.

EFSB-W-1; EFSB-W-2; EFSB-W-2(1)).[20] The Company maintained that using the MDAR-approved herbicide consistent with the Company's vegetation management protocols would mitigate any environmental impacts from the application of herbicides during the operation of the expanded West Pond Substation (Company Brief at 38, citing Exhs. EFSB-W-1; EFSB-W-2).

The Company stated that construction activities would involve using varying quantities of oils, and construction equipment fuels (Exh. EV-1, at 40). To avoid potential impacts to groundwater from spills of these oils and fuels, the Company would implement the following spill prevention and response measures by requiring its contractors to: (1) adhere to BMPs regarding storage and handling of oil and potential hazardous materials; (2) inspect vehicles and equipment daily; (3) properly operate and maintain construction equipment; (4) always have spill kits available; and (5) closely monitor and maintain erosion and sediment control, and controls relating to spill prevention and response (Exh. EV-1, at 40). Moreover, according to the Company, it maintains a 24/7 spill response program in the event of an inadvertent release (Exh. EV-1, at 40).

The Company stated that the new transformers at the expanded West Pond Substation would include 110 percent passive secondary spill containment, which would be consistent with the National Electric Safety Code ("NESC") and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers ("IEEE") Guide for Containment of Oil Spills in Substations (Exh. EV-1, at 40; Tr. 1, at 24). According to the Company, the planned secondary spill containment would be able to accommodate a 24-hour, 25-year storm event (Exh. EV-1, at 40).

The Company stated that it designed a stormwater management system for the West Pond Substation Expansion in accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection ("MassDEP") Stormwater Management Standards that would minimize the impacts of stormwater flooding (Exh. EFSB-G-12). The Company would also develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan ("SWPPP") for the Substation Expansions, as required by the U.S.

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[20] According to the Company, IVM uses a combination of maintenance techniques that include mechanical, herbicide and cultural control, and instructs herbicide maintenance applications to be applied at the lowest effective labeled rate and timed for maximum effect (Exh. EFSB-W-2(1) at 4).

Environmental Protection Agency ("USEPA") Stormwater Construction General Permit ("CGP"), which the Project would require (Exh. EV-1, at 38).

(2) Tremont Substation Expansion

The Company stated that there are no wetlands or waterways within the Tremont Substation Expansion Site, nor is the site located within any mapped Flood Zone (Exh. EV-1, at 47). However, the Company noted that there are wetlands within a few hundred feet of the site—outside of the jurisdiction of the local conservation commission but close enough that the Company would implement erosion and sedimentation control plan as part of the Tremont Substation Expansion (Tr. 1, at 25). In addition, the Company would implement the same spill prevention, spill response, and herbicide use measures at the Tremont Substation Expansion as proposed for the West Pond Substation Expansion (Company Brief at 47, citing Exhs. EFSB-W-1; EFSB-W-2). The new transformers at the expanded Tremont Substation would also include 110 percent secondary spill containment (Exh. EV-1, at 47; Tr. 1, at 24-25).

According to the Company, the Tremont Substation Expansion would not add new impervious surface to the Tremont Substation Expansion Site and, thus, does not require additional stormwater management design (Exh. EFSB-G-12; Tr. 1, at 100). The Tremont Substation Expansion would also be covered by the Project's SWPPP that the Company would develop (Exh. EV-1, at 38).

(B) Analysis and Findings

(1) West Pond Substation Expansion

The record shows there are no wetlands or waters resources on or adjacent to the West Pond Substation Expansion Site, and it is not located within any mapped Flood Zone. While the West Pond Substation Expansion Site is located in the Town of Plymouth APOD, the record reflects that the site is not located in a recharge area to any public water supply wells. The record shows that the Company confirmed via geotechnical analysis that the finished grade would provide separation to groundwater comparable to APOD requirements. The record also shows the Company has been and would periodically apply herbicides within and outside the substation fence but would only use MDAR-approved herbicides for use near waters sources and in

accordance with the Company's vegetation management plan. See Section II.D.4 for the discussion on the zoning exemption request for the APOD requirements.

The record also shows the Company would implement various BMPs to minimize the risk of environmental impacts associated with potential spills of oil, greases, and fuels used during Project construction, including proper handling of oil and potential hazardous materials, have spill kits available, and maintain a 24/7 spill response program. Moreover, the new transformers at the expanded West Pond Substation would include 110 percent passive secondary spill containment.

The record shows the West Pond Substation Expansion design would conform to the MassDEP Stormwater Management Standards and minimize the impacts of stormwater flooding. Lastly, the record shows the Company would develop a SWPPP for both Substation Expansions. The Siting Board directs the Company to submit the SWPPP or SWPPPs for the West Pond and Tremont Substation Expansions to the Siting Board once it has or they have been finalized. In addition, the Siting Board directs the Company to provide Project design updates to the Siting Board at the 60 percent and 90 percent design and include a narrative of how the design meets the MassDEP Stormwater Management Standards, both for managing stormwater runoff and controlling erosion and sedimentation.

(2) Tremont Substation Expansion

Without wetlands, waterways or mapped Flood Zone adjacent and within the Tremont Substation Expansion Site, the Tremont Substation Expansion would have limited impacts on wetland and water resources. The Company would implement the same mitigation measures for spill prevention and response and herbicide use as the West Pond Substation. The new transformer at the expanded Tremont Substation would also include 110 percent passive secondary spill containment. The record shows that, due to minimal disturbance and no increase in stormwater runoff, the Tremont Substation Expansion would not require additional stormwater management design. Noted above, the Company would develop a SWPPP for the Tremont Substation Expansion.

iii. Visual

(A) Company's Description

(1) West Pond Substation Expansion

According to the Company, West Pond Substation Expansion would be primarily visible from Federal Furnace Road (Exh. EV-1, at 40). The Company stated that, while the West Pond Substation Expansion would change the viewshed from the road, the expansion would be a continuation of the existing substation use and would not significantly alter the overall visual characteristics (Exh. EV-1, at 40-41). Beyond the road, the Company indicated that the substation and expansion area are largely surrounded by trees or forested areas on the remaining three sides and vegetation removal associated with the West Pond Substation Expansion would not significantly alter this natural buffer (Exh. EV-1, at 41). The Company noted that the nearest residential abutters beyond the natural buffer to the southeast, west, and northeast of the expanded West Pond Substation would be approximately 230 feet, 275 feet, and 360 feet, respectively (Exh. EV-1, at 41). The Company also maintained that the expanded substation and four relocated existing transmission line structures would represent a continuation of the existing use and would not significantly alter the visual characteristics of the area (Exh. EV-1, at 41).

The Company stated that nearby residents had raised visual mitigation at meetings held by the Company (Exh. EFSB-V-1). The Company explained that it would document mitigation planting requests and meet with those residents during the development and construction phases of the Project (Exh. EFSB-V-1). Once the construction of West Pond Substation Expansion is complete, the Company would meet with residents whose views may have been "materially" affected by the Project to discuss and implement appropriate visual mitigation, ideally within six months of notifying the abutters (Exhs. EFSB-V-1; EV-1, at 41; Tr. 1, at 74-76).[21]

[21] Eversource noted that, despite it typically providing visual mitigation only after a project is complete, it had coordinated the planting of two arborvitaes on an abutter's property to screen the view of the West Pond Substation upon receiving feedback from that abutter (Exh. EFSB-V-1).

(2) Tremont Substation Expansion

According to the Company, Tremont Substation Expansion would be primarily visible from the North Carver Road Extension, which ends at a cul-de-sac just east of the Tremont Substation (Exh. EV-1, at 47). The Company stated that there are cranberry bogs to the east of the North Carver Road Extension, Interstate Route 495 to the north, and Eversource-owned facilities to the south and west (Exh. EV-1, at 47). The Company stated the Tremont Substation Expansion would represent a continuation of the existing substation use and overall would not significantly alter the visual characteristics of the area (Exh. EV-1, at 47). Similar to the proposed mitigation for abutters to the West Pond Substation Expansion, the Company would consider the potential impact on any homeowners visually affected by the Tremont Substation Expansion and offer appropriate and reasonable off-site screening to those whose view has "materially" changed due to construction of the Project (Exh. EV-1, at 47-48).

(B) Analysis and Findings

The record shows the West Pond Substation Expansion would maintain the natural vegetative buffer between the substation and closest residences to the substation. The vegetative buffer would continue providing visual screening to nearby residences. In addition, the record reflects that the West Pond Substation Expansion, as a continuation of the existing substation use, would not significantly alter the overall visual characteristics. For Tremont Substation Expansion, the record shows the site is surrounded by non-residential uses and the expanded substation would be a continuation of the existing substation use and, thus, would not significantly alter the overall visual characters of the area.

The record shows that the Company would engage with concerned residents and provide, as appropriate, visual mitigation for residents whose views have been materially affected. The record also shows that the Company would meet with residents with concerns about visual impacts from the Substation Expansions during its project development and construction phrases, and after completion of the Substation Expansions, the Company would notify, meet with, evaluate, and implement, as appropriate, visual mitigation for residents whose views have been materially affected. The Siting Board directs the Company to make a concerted effort in notifying potentially

affected residents near the Project, including providing notices in different formats, such as door hangers, to nearby property owners, and make good faith efforts to implement reasonable visual mitigation for those residents, as appropriate.

In addition, consistent with previous Siting Board decisions, the Siting Board directs the Company to implement new Dark Skies compliant lighting, study the feasibility of making the existing substation lighting Dark Skies compliant, and submit a report to the Siting Board as part of the 60 percent Project design update. See HMLP at 59; Hillman Energy Center, LLC, EFSB 25-08, at 98-99 (2026) ("Hillman ESS").

iv. Noise

(A) Company's Description

(1) West Pond Substation Expansion

The Company would use construction methods and equipment that reduce noise where appropriate, including using the quietest equipment possible to perform the work, designing foundations that minimize the amount of excavation required, and maximizing preassembly of components off-site (Exh. EV-1, at 41-42). Construction would take place six days per week to minimize the construction duration and associated impacts (Exh. EV-1, at 42).

The Company conducted a sound study to determine potential impacts associated with the operation of the expanded West Pond Substation with its two replacement and one added transformers (Exh. EV-1, at 42). The sound study included: (1) measurement of ambient sound levels in the vicinity of the substation; (2) sound level modeling to predict impacts from the West Pond Substation Expansion; and (3) a comparison of modeled sound levels with the applicable regulations and the MassDEP Noise Policy (Exh. EV-1, at 42).

According to the Company, the sound study for the expanded West Pond Substation demonstrated that operation of the expanded substation would not result in sound level increases greater than 10 A-weighted decibels ("dBA") above ambient conditions nor are pure tone conditions expected to occur, in compliance with all applicable regulations and policies (Exh. EV-1, at 43). While the results in Exh. EV-1(M), at 13, Table 3, showed pure tone conditions at eight out of the 29 nearby residences included in the sound modeling, the Company contends that the sound study is a prediction only and is based on ambient sound measurements taken at a location

other than the residences (Company Brief at 40-41, n.23, citing Exh. EFSB-NO-2; see also Tr. 1 at 76-82). Furthermore, the Company asserts that it had considerable experience in mitigating pure tones and would take action to mitigate if it receives any noise complaints from the substation operation, which would be site specific and may include adjusting transformer taps, placing vibration isolators under the transformer, construction of sound barriers, and introduction of masking frequency sounds (Company Brief at 40-41, n.23, citing Exh. EFSB-NO-2; Tr. 1, at 83). The Company noted that the Town of Plymouth does not have a bylaw or regulations that prescribe specific noise limits except for the hour restrictions on construction activities, as discussed in the project construction section (Section II.C.4.a.ii) (Exh. EV-1, at 42, n.22).

(2) Tremont Substation Expansion

For the construction of the Tremont Substation Expansion, the Company would employ the same noise mitigation and construction hour limitation as proposed for the West Pond Substation Expansion (Exh. EV-1, at 48).

The Company also conducted a sound study to determine potential sound level impacts associated with the operation of the expanded Tremont Substation with its new transformers in operation (Exh. EV-1, at 48). According to the Company, the sound study for the expanded Tremont Substation demonstrated that operation of the expanded substation would not result in sound level increases greater than 10 dBA above ambient conditions nor are pure tone conditions expected to occur, in compliance with all applicable regulations and policies (Exh. EV-1, at 48). The Company noted that the Town of Wareham does not have a bylaw or regulations that prescribe specific noise limits (Exh. EV-1, at 48, n.23).

(B) Analysis and Findings

For construction noise impacts, the record shows the Company would minimize construction and equipment noise levels through the various design and construction mitigation, as well as limiting construction work hours, to be between 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, which the Company would ensure are agreeable to the Towns (RR-EFSB-2). These mitigation measures are consistent with recent Siting

Board cases. See NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 19-06A/D.P.U. 19-142A/19-143A/23-22, at 50 (2025) ("Mid-Cape Project Change"). The Siting Board directs the Company to limit construction to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and to the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Should the Company need to extend construction work beyond the above-noted hours and days, with the exception of emergency circumstance on a given day necessitating extended hours, the Siting Board directs the Company to seek written permission from the relevant municipal authority before the commencement of such work, and to provide the Siting Board with a copy of such permission. If Company and municipal officials are not able to agree on whether such extended construction hours should occur, the Company may request prior authorization from the Siting Board and shall provide the relevant municipality with a copy of any such request and authorization, if granted.

For operational noise impacts, Eversource asserts that based on the Company's sound studies and its interpretation of the sound modeling results for both Substation Expansions, the operation of neither substation would result in sound level increases greater than 10 dBA above ambient conditions nor are pure tones expected to occur. However, the record reflects that the Company's sound study for the expanded West Pond Substation predicts pure tone conditions at several nearby residences. The record indicates that pure tone modeling can be less than certain and the Company would take action to mitigate if pure tones were to occur. To ensure compliance, the Siting Board directs the Company to conduct sound testing for the expanded West Pond Substation within 120 days of the Project's commercial operation and to submit a report to the Siting Board showing consistency with the limits set forth in the MassDEP Noise Policy, including additional mitigation if the testing results are not consistent with such limits.

v. Air Quality

(A) Company's Description

(1) Construction Dust and Emissions

The Company stated that there would be no air impacts resulting from operation of the expanded substations (Company Brief at 42). For the construction of both Substation Expansions, the Company stated that air quality impacts would be temporary and limited to the fugitive dust from disturbed soil surface areas and emissions from construction equipment and motor vehicles

(Exh. EV-1, at 43, 48). The Company would mitigate such impacts by: (1) controlling dust by spraying water; (2) deploying anti-tracking pads; (3) sweeping roadway pavement; (4) temporarily stabilizing disturbed areas prior to permanent stabilization; (5) directing contractors to retrofit any diesel-powered non-road construction equipment rated 50 horsepower or above to be used for 30 or more days over the course of the Project with USEPA-verified or equivalent emission control devices; (6) using ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel in Eversource-owned diesel-powered construction equipment; and (7) complying with anti-idling laws except when idling is necessary as a matter of operations and safety (Exh. EV-1, at 43-44, 48).

(2) Sulfur Hexafluoride

The Company stated that the Substation Expansions would increase the amount of sulfur hexafluoride ("SF_6") used at each substation: an increase of 538 pounds to 592 pounds at the expanded Tremont Substation, and an increase of 16 pounds to 1,246 pounds at the expanded West Pond Substation (Exh. EFSB-A-1). The Company stated that substitutes for the SF_6 in the 115 kV gas-filled circuit breakers and gas filled circuit switches proposed for installation on the Project are not commercially available at this time (Exh. EFSB-A-1).

The Company maintained that the SF_6 gas circuit switches and gas circuit breakers proposed for the Substation Expansions would be designed to have a maximum leak rate of 0.1 percent per year (Exh. EFSB-A-1). According to the Company, trained Eversource personnel would handle the gas and equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's work practices and instruction guide, and a vendor would recover and reclaim the SF_6 gas when the equipment is retired, minimizing atmospheric releases (Exh. EFSB-A-1).

(B) Analysis and Findings

The record shows the Project would have two types of air quality impacts: (1) construction-related emissions; and (2) minute amounts (0.1 percent, or less, yearly leakage) of SF_6 contained in the gas-insulated electrical equipment. The Company would mitigate the construction dust and equipment/vehicle emissions by implementing various BMPs such as water spraying and using ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, which is consistent with construction BMPs

proposed in Siting Board cases. HMLP at 59-60; Crystal Spring at 46-47; Southcoast Wind Energy LLC, EFSB 22-04/ D.P.U. 22-67/ 22-68, at 142-143, 157 (2024) ("Southcoast Wind").

The Company would use SF_6, a potent GHG with long atmospheric lifetime, which is 23,900 times more potent than carbon dioxide, the most common GHG. See Mid-Cape Project Change at 57. The Company would mitigate SF_6 emissions through training of its personnel who would handle the gas and gas-filled equipment. MassDEP regulates the use and emissions of SF_6 in gas-insulated switchgear under 310 CMR 7.72, which sets a maximum leak rate at 0.1 percent per year that the Company is obligated to follow. As in previous cases, the Company reported that alternatives to gas-insulated equipment that use SF_6 are not yet commercially available. Mid-Cape Project Change at 57. The Siting Board continues to strongly encourages the Company to endeavor to explore alternatives to SF_6 use, wherever possible.

vi. Traffic

(A) Company's Description

According to the Company, both Substation Expansions would require access from local roads during construction and there may be situations where the Company has to temporarily block Federal Furnace Road and North Carver Road Extension to accept supplies, move larger pieces of equipment onto the substation sites, or to facilitate underground distribution line installation across the road (Exh. EV-1, at 44, 48-49). The Company emphasized such situations would be infrequent and for a short duration, and it would use a police detail (Exh. EV-1, at, 44, 49). The Company would coordinate with the respective towns to ensure construction traffic impacts are minimized and, to the extent practicable, schedule delivery of materials and equipment during off-peak traffic hours (Exh. EV-1, at 44, 48-49). While the Company noted that earth removal would result in about 100 ten-cubic-yard-dump-truck trips from the Tremont Substation Expansion Site and 390 trips from the West Pond Substation Expansion Site, the Company maintained that its standard traffic mitigation measures would be adequate to minimize and mitigate such impacts and did not intend to develop formal traffic management plans for either Substation Expansion (Exh. EFSB-T-1; Tr. 1, at 93-96). Nevertheless, the Company would coordinate with the respective town, including implementing additional mitigation measures as necessary, to ensure that construction

traffic impacts would be minimized (Exh. EFSB-T-2; Company Brief at 43, 49). After construction is completed the expanded substations would not be staffed (Exh. EV-1, at 59, 65).

(B) Analysis and Findings

The record reflects that traffic impacts from Project construction would be temporary, infrequent, and brief. The Company would use a police detail where traffic must be temporarily delayed and coordinate with the respective towns to ensure traffic impacts are minimized to the extent practicable. The record shows the Company had several meetings with the towns and it appears the towns did not express concerns about the Project's traffic impacts. Nevertheless, the record also reflects that there would be hundreds of truck trips associated with the Project's earth removal operations in each of the Substation Expansion Sites. While the Company maintained that its standard traffic mitigation measures would minimize and mitigate the impacts of these truck trips, the Siting Board directs the Company to consult and coordinate with the towns about the truck trips associated with the Project's earth removal operations and provide a report to the Siting Board at least 90 days prior to the start of Project construction, describing any town concerns or identified issues, corresponding mitigation measures, and any subsequent feedback from the towns. For Project operations, the record reflects that the Project would not be staffed post-construction, thus avoiding any traffic impacts during operation.

vii. Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials

(A) Company's Description

The Company would prevent any materials removed during Project construction that are characterized by MassDEP as waste ban materials from being disposed in landfills and recycle materials to the extent practicable (Exh. EV-1, at 45, 49). In the event of encountering contaminated materials, soil, or groundwater, the Company would manage such materials pursuant to the Massachusetts Contingency Plan ("MCP"), including contracting with a licensed site professional ("LSP") (Exh. EV-1, at 44-45, 49).

The Company stated that there are no mapped MassDEP Tier Classified Chapter 21E sites or properties with activity and use limitations within one-quarter mile of the West Pond Substation Expansion Site (Exh. EV-1, at 44).

For Tremont Substation Expansion Site, the Company stated that there are two directly abutting MassDEP Tier Classified 21E sites associated with the Eversource Service Center and Garage located at 7 Doty Street in Wareham (Exh. EV-1, at 49). The Company submitted a Response Action Outcome Statement for both 21E sites, which indicated remedial actions taken were sufficient to achieve a level of no significant risk (Exh. EV-1, at 49).

(B) Analysis and Findings

The Company would comply with the MassDEP waste ban on certain materials, recycle materials to the extent practicable, and comply with the MCP. Concerning potential subsurface contamination, the records show that there are no mapped contamination sites within one-quarter mile of the West Pond Substation Expansion Site but there are two mapped contamination sites abutting the Tremont Substation Site. However, the record reflects that the contamination on these sites had been remediated to a level of no significant risk. The Siting Board expects the Company to meet the waste ban requirements for discarded materials that should be diverted from disposal to reuse or recycling.

viii. Safety

(A) Company's Description

The Company would construct both Substation Expansions in full compliance with the NESC, standards of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers ("IEEE") and the American Standards Institute ("ASI"), good utility practice, and in accordance with the Company's specifications, BMPs, final engineering plans, and the conditions specified in permits and approvals obtained for the Project (Company Brief at 44-45, citing Exh. EV-1, at 35-38). The Company stated that it has an Emergency Response Plan ("ERP") that applies to all its substations (Exhs. EFSB-S-3; EFSB-S-4; see EFSB-S-4(1) for the ERP). The Company highlighted that it maintains a system control center that would dispatch personnel and equipment to the scene of any unplanned event to coordinate first response actions (Exh. EFSB-S-3). For Project construction, the Company would require its contractors to develop a site-specific safety plan, which would be kept available at the construction sites after the Company's review and approval (Company Brief at 36, citing Tr. 1, at 70-72).

For security, the Company would secure areas that are under construction but not in service and outside of the existing substation fences by temporary fences (Exh. EFSB-S-2). The Company stated, once the Project is constructed, the first line security device would be the substation perimeter fences, augmented by security cameras located around both substations (Exh. EFSB-S-2). The Company would also implement cybersecurity measures, including card readers on doors and access points, and firewalls on communication links (Exh. EFSB-S-2).

The Company sought to address Project vulnerabilities to climate change through a comprehensive internal review using the best available data on related hazards (Exhs. EFSB-G-7; EFSB-G-12). The Company used ResilientMass Action Team ("RMAT") data to inform design decisions and mitigate potential vulnerabilities to climate-related hazards at specific Project locations and had been proactive in its engagement with local government agencies to obtain input to help ensure the Project does not exacerbate any climate-related hazards in the communities (Exh. EFSB-G-7).

(B) Analysis and Findings

Concerning construction standards, the record shows the Company would construct the Project in compliance with industry code and standards, good utility practice, Company's specifications, BMPs, final engineering plans, and the conditions specified in permits and approvals obtained for the Project. For emergency response, the record shows that the Company maintains a generic ERP and protocol backed by trained personnel and equipment that the Company can dispatch to the scene of any unplanned event to coordinate first response actions. The Company would also require its contractor to develop a site-specific safety plan for Project construction. Concerning security measures, the record shows that the expanded substations would be secured by perimeter fences, security cameras, card readers on doors and access points, and firewalls on communication links.

ix. Magnetic Field

(A) Company's Description

The Company stated that the power flows and nominal line voltages at both substations before and after the Project would not change substantially (Exh. EFSB-EMF-1). While the fence

lines of the substations would be changing, the Company maintained the magnetic fields would be greatly diminished beyond the fence, and the closest abutters would be located at such distances from the substations so that there would be no meaningful changes to magnetic fields resulting from the Project (Exh. EFSB-EMF-1). The Company explained that magnetic fields typically become indistinguishable from background level at around 300 feet from 115-kV transmission lines (Tr. 1, at 97-98). According to the Company, the expanded Tremont Substation would be roughly 450 feet from the nearest residence whereas the expanded West Pond Substation would maintain the existing distances of approximately 250 to 300 feet to the closest residences (Tr. 1, at 98-99).

(B) Analysis and Findings

The Tremont Substation Expansion would not bring the substation within 300 feet of the closest residence—the distance that magnetic fields from the Project would become indistinguishable from background levels. The West Pond Substation Expansion would not bring the substation closer to its closest residences and thus would not cause notable changes to magnetic field levels at these residences.

5. Conclusion on Public Convenience and Welfare

Based on the: (1) need for or public benefit of the use; (2) alternatives explored; and (3) impacts of the proposed use, the Siting Board finds that, the Project is necessary for the purpose alleged; the benefits of the Project to the general public exceed the local impacts; and the Project is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public and consistent with the public interest.

D. Zoning Exemptions Required

As a final requirement pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3, the petitioner must establish that it requires exemption from the zoning ordinance or bylaw. Park City Wind at 178; Westfield at 6-7; K Street Substation at 8-9. Eversource has filed a joint petition for individual exemptions from the operation of the Plymouth Zoning Bylaws for the construction and operation of the proposed

Substation expansion and from the operation of the Weymouth Zoning Ordinance for the construction and operation of the Tap Station.

1. Standard of Review

In determining whether exemption from a particular provision of a zoning ordinance is "required" for purposes of G.L. c. 40A, § 3, the Siting Board makes a determination whether the exemption is necessary to allow construction or operation of the petitioner's project. Beverly-Salem at 116; Sudbury-Hudson at 196; Vineyard Wind LLC, EFSB 17-05/D.P.U. 18-18/18-19, at 139 (2019) (Vineyard Wind). It is a petitioner's burden to identify the zoning provisions applicable to the project and then to establish on the record that exemption from those provisions is required:

> The Company is both in a better position to identify its needs, and has the responsibility to fully plead its own case . . . The [Siting Board] fully expects that, henceforth, all public service corporations seeking exemptions under [G.L.] c. 40A, § 3 will identify fully and in a timely manner all exemptions that are necessary for the corporation to proceed with its proposed activities, so that the [Siting Board] is provided ample opportunity to investigate the need for the required exemptions.

Park City Wind at 178; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 102-103; Vineyard Wind at 139.

2. Requested Exemptions from the Plymouth Zoning Bylaws

a. Company Position

As shown below in Table 8, Eversource has requested the following exemptions:

Table 8. Requested Exemptions from the Plymouth Zoning Bylaws for the West Pond Substation Expansion

Zoning Section(s)	Available Zoning Relief and Proposed Use	Company Rationale for Exemption
Use Table R-25 Medium Lot Residential District Section E, Industrial Use Code 16 (Utility Plants and Substations) The Use Table, at Section E, Industrial, Use Code 17 (Utility line, pole or other support structure above 40 feet), allows the height of utility structures to exceed 40 feet upon the grant of a special permit.	Special permits required: Two transition line terminal structures that would be constructed within the expanded West Pond Substation yard would be approximately 60 feet tall and exceed the maximum height of 35 feet for structures in the R-25 Medium Lot Residential zoning district (Exh. EV-1, at 55). Minimum rear yard setback in the R-25 Medium Lot Residential zoning district is 40 feet (Exh. EV-1, at 56). In one portion of the rear yard, structures will be located approximately 27 feet from the adjacent lot line, and a dimensional variance would be required to ensure that the location of the structures in the rear yard setback complies with the Dimensional Table (Exh. EV-1, at 56).	A Special Permit is required to expand the existing West Pond Substation to an adjacent Company-owned parcel (Company Brief at 61; Exh. EV-1, at 60).[22] Section 203-10 provides that all uses authorized by special permit shall conform to all setback and height requirements, which the expansion would not (Exh. EV-1, at 61). So, the height of the structures would require a Special Permit (Company Brief at 61; Exh. EV-1, at 55). The nonconforming rear yard setback for the proposed structures would require a dimensional variance (Exh. EV-1, at 56).[23]

[22] For each instance where the Zoning Bylaw would require a special permit, the Company argues that the standards for granting a special permit are subjective, the grant of a special permit is discretionary, and a special permit could contain burdensome or restrictive conditions that could impede the Company from constructing the West Pond Substation Expansion in accordance with applicable state and industry standards (Company Brief at 54, citing Exh. EV-1, at 52-53).

[23] For each instance where the Zoning Bylaw would require a variance, the Company argues that it would be difficult to meet the statutory requirements for the grant of a variance (Company Brief at 57-58; Exh. EV-1, at 56-57). Because of the legal uncertainty in obtaining variances, and the potential for adverse interpretations, delay, burden and undue expense associated with the permitting process and appeals therefrom, the Company seeks an exemption from the rear yard setback requirement in the Dimensional Table, the

Zoning Section(s)	Available Zoning Relief and Proposed Use	Company Rationale for Exemption
Section 206-1 Table of Uses allowed in Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD) Require special permits for soil changes and herbicide use	Special permit for permanent removal or re-grading of existing soil cover (Exh. EV-1, at 54-55). Special permit for herbicide use (Exh. EV-1, at 54-55).	Special Permit required. The Company seeks an exemption from the requirements of Section 206-1 regarding these uses in the APOD (Company Brief at 62; Exh. EV-1, at 55).
Sections 202-1 and 202-2	A Zoning Permit from the Town of Plymouth Building Commissioner, according to Section 201-3, is a prerequisite to apply for a building permit (Exh. EV-1, at 53). However, per Section 202-1, the Building Commissioner cannot issue a zoning permit unless the proposed work conforms with the provisions of the Plymouth Zoning Bylaw (Exh. EV-1, at 53)	The zoning permit is a prerequisite to the issuance of a building permit and cannot be issued where work does not conform with the Zoning Bylaws (Company Brief at 62; Exh. EV-1, at 53). The Company would not be able to obtain a Zoning Permit without obtaining all other required zoning relief (Company Brief at 62; Exh. EV-1, at 53)
Sections 203-2B and 203-2C - Natural Features Conversion and Earth Removal Section 203-2B prohibits the cutting of trees larger than six inches in diameter or clearing of trees three or more feet in height from any area larger than 3,000 square feet,	Variances and special permits would be required (Exh. EV-1, at 57). An area larger than 3,000 square feet would be cleared of vegetation in connection with the expansion, mostly toward the existing transmission corridor to the north of the existing Substation (Exh. EV-1, at 57). Excavation associated with the expansion may not meet the following requirements of Section	These provisions have numerous requirements regarding excavation, soil removal and regrading, and tree removal that would require the grant of variances and special permits (Company Brief at 62-63; Exh. EV-1, at 62). The substation expansion would include excavations within 50 feet of lot lines, particularly along the western edge of the substation expansion where property line setbacks are less than 27 feet (Company Brief at 62-63; Exh.

requirements of Sections 203-2B and 203-2C, and any parking requirements that could be imposed per Section 203-7 (Company Brief at 57-60; Exh. EV-1, at 57-59).

Zoning Section(s)	Available Zoning Relief and Proposed Use	Company Rationale for Exemption
except as authorized by a Zoning Permit	203-2C: (a) the maximum depth of excavation shall be no closer than ten feet above the highest historical groundwater level; (b) excavation or depositing of excavated material shall not be made within 50 feet of any lot line; (c) no excavation depth of greater than 15 feet shall be made within 100 feet of any lot line; and (d) for excavation sites in or directly abutting certain zoning districts including the R-25 Medium Lot Residential zoning district, excavation shall not occur within 200 feet of the project's property lines, which shall include a 100-foot vegetated natural buffer (Exh. EV-1, at 58). The West Pond Substation Expansion would include excavations within 50 feet of lot lines, particularly along the western edge of the West Pond Substation Expansion Site where property line setbacks are less than 27 feet (Exh. EV-1, at 58). There would also be new equipment and foundations within 200 feet of property lines, which would require excavation during construction (Exh. EV-1, at 58).	EV-1 at 57-58). There would also be new equipment and foundations within 200 feet of property lines, which would require excavation during construction (Company Brief at 59; Exh. EV-1 at 57-58).
Section 203-7 Off-street parking	A variance would be required from Section 203-7 to ensure that the West Pond Substation Expansion is consistent with the parking requirements (Exh. EV-1, at 59).	Parking ratios are not provided for public utility/substation use (Company Brief at 63; Exh. EV-1, at 63). To ensure that the project complies with any parking requirements that may be imposed (for an unmanned substation), the Company seeks an exemption from any such

Zoning Section(s)	Available Zoning Relief and Proposed Use	Company Rationale for Exemption
		requirements (Company Brief at 63; Exh. EV-1, at 63).
Section 203-15 Site plan review	All developments that require building and zoning permits from the Building Commissioner require site plan review, except for uses or structures for which a required special permit or variance has been obtained (Exh. EV-1, at 59). The Plymouth Zoning Bylaw authorizes the Building Commissioner to approve the plan or deny it upon the Planning Board's recommendation due to noncompliance with the Zoning Bylaw or an incomplete application (Exh. EV-1, at 59-60). The West Pond Substation Expansion does not comply with several provisions of the Zoning Bylaw and would require special permits and variances that may not be granted; accordingly, site plan approval likely would be denied (Exh. EV-1, at 60).	Site plan approval will be denied if a project does not comply with zoning (Company Brief at 63; Exh. EV-1, at 63). Because the West Pond Substation Expansion requires zoning relief that it has not obtained, site plan approval would not be granted (Company Brief at 63; Exh. EV-1, at 63). Moreover, the Company must have the discretion to design the West Pond Substation Expansion consistent with utility standards, and the technical and engineering issues involved are beyond the scope of typical site plan review, the approval of which may include burdensome or restrictive conditions placed on the construction of the expansion (Company Brief at 60, 63; Exh. EV-1, at 60, 63).

b. Outreach to Plymouth Officials

Eversource discussed zoning issues at a meeting with Town of Plymouth municipal officials on November 18, 2024, to present an overview of work to be performed in Plymouth, including the West Pond Substation Expansion and the ROW structure Replacements (Company Brief at 8, citing Exh. EV-1, at 9; EFSB-G-2(2)). The Company explicitly discussed its plan to seek individual and comprehensive exemptions pursuant to G.L. c. 40A § 3 in lieu of seeking local zoning relief (Company Brief at 8, citing Exhs. EV-1, at 9; EFSB-G-2(2)). Next, the Company

met with Town officials on January 7, 2025, to further discuss the West Pond Substation Expansion and plans (Company Brief at 8, citing Exhs. EV-1, at 9; EFSB-G-2(2)).

3. Requested Exemptions from the Wareham Zoning Bylaws

a. Company Position

The Tremont Substation was originally constructed in the 1920s, prior to the adoption of the first zoning enactment in Wareham in 1951 and was constructed without the need for zoning relief (Exh. EV-1, at 64). The existing Substation qualifies as a non-conforming use of the substation parcel per Article 16 of the Zoning Bylaws (Exh. EV-1, at 64). The Tremont Substation Expansion will expand the Substation Site onto an adjacent Company-owned parcel located in the same underlying zoning district that is not grandfathered for substation use (Exhs. EV-1, at 64; see EV-1(E)). Because substation use is prohibited in this zoning district, a use variance would be needed to expand the Substation onto the adjacent parcel (Exh. EV-1, at 64).

Eversource also identifies parking requirements that could be imposed per Article 9 as problematic for the Project to ensure that the Tremont Substation Expansion complies with the minimum required parking requirements (Exh. EV-1, at 65-66). The Company argues that the legal uncertainty in obtaining variances, and the potential for adverse interpretations, delay, burden and undue expense associated with the permitting process and potential appeals is Eversource's reason to seek an exemption from any parking requirements that could be imposed per Article 9 (Exh. EV-1, at 66).

Eversource is seeking exemptions to allow for the timely, efficient, and consistent construction of the Project in Wareham (Company Brief at 52). Eversource is seeking the following exemptions as listed in Table 9 below:

Table 9. Requested Exemptions from the Wareham Zoning Bylaws for the Tremont Substation Expansion

Zoning Section(s)	Available Zoning Relief and Proposed Use	Company Rationale for Exemption
Principle Use Regulations Section 320	Use variance for expansion of the Substation onto the adjacent Eversource owned parcel (Exh. EV-1, at 64). The adjacent parcel is not grandfathered for substation use, and a use variance would be needed to expand the substation onto the adjacent parcel (Exh. EV-1, at 64).	Table of Principle Use Regulations found in Section 320 prohibits "public utility" uses in the Commercial Strip ("CS") zoning district (Company Brief at 64-65; Exh. EV-1 at 63-64).
Article 9 Off-street parking	Article 9 of the Wareham Zoning Bylaw regulates off-street parking by use but does not include public utilities in its list of uses (Exh. EV-1, at 65). In addition, other requirements such as screening, landscaping, paving, and size of parking areas are included in the zoning provision (Exh. EV-1, at 65). The Building Inspector would need to make a determination on the requirements in the absence of specific use requirements (Exh. EV-1, at 65).	Parking ratios are not provided for public utility uses (Company Brief at 65-66; Exh. EV-1, at 66). To ensure that the project complies with any parking requirements that may be imposed for the unmanned substation, the Company seeks an exemption from any such requirements and the need to seek a variance (Company Brief at 65-66; Exh. EV-1, at 66).

b. Outreach to Wareham Officials

An Eversource community relations representative discussed zoning with the Wareham Town Planner who stated that he had no issues or concerns regarding the Project (Exhs. EV-4, at 2; EFSB-G-2(1)). The Town Planner stated that he understood the need for the Project and appreciated the outreach (Exh. EV-4, at 2).

4. Analysis and Findings on Necessity of Individual Zoning Exemptions

Eversource identified the zoning provisions applicable to the Project in Plymouth and Wareham and asserted that zoning exemptions from the provisions are required. The Company asserts that to avoid the legal uncertainty, potential for adverse interpretations, delay, burden and undue expense associated with obtaining a special permit, site plan review or variance, the Siting

Board should grant requested exemptions from the Plymouth Zoning Bylaws and the Wareham Zoning Bylaws.

The Siting Board finds the Company has established a need for the Project and a need for the individual exemptions requested to construct and operate the proposed Substation Expansions as presented in the record.

5. Comprehensive Zoning Exemptions

a. Standard of Review for Comprehensive Zoning Exemptions

Regarding comprehensive zoning exemptions, the Siting Board grants such requests "on a case-by-case basis where the applicant demonstrates that issuance of a comprehensive exemption could avoid substantial public harm by serving to prevent a delay in the construction and operation of the proposed use." Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 109; Eversource Oak Bluffs at 68; Eversource Westfield at 55. To make a determination regarding substantial public harm, the Siting Board has articulated relevant factors, including, but not limited to, whether: (1) the proposed project contributes to a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth; (2) the project is time-sensitive; (3) the project involves multiple municipalities that could have conflicting zoning provisions that might hinder the uniform development of a large project spanning these communities; (4) the proponent of the project has actively engaged the communities and responsible officials to discuss the applicability of local zoning provisions to the project and any local concerns; and (5) the affected communities do not oppose the issuance of the comprehensive exemption. Southcoast Wind at 243-244; Park City Wind at 208; New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid, EFSB 12-1/D.P.U. 12-46/12-47, at 88 (2014) ("IRP").

The Siting Board considers time sensitivity for projects to determine whether the granting of a comprehensive zoning exemption would avoid substantial public harm. See Southcoast Wind at 246; Park City Wind at 210; IRP, at 88.

b. Company Position

Eversource asserts that the Substation Expansions are needed to: (1) maintain a reliable electric system; (2) enable the Group Study DG facilities in the Plymouth Area to safely interconnect and operate; (3) allow future DG applicants in the Plymouth Area to interconnect; and

(4) accommodate future load growth due to electrification (Company Brief at 68, citing Exh. EV-1, at 68-69). The Substation Expansions are imminently needed because DER facilities in the interconnection queue cannot currently interconnect into the existing transmission (Company Brief at 68, citing Exh. EV-1, at 68-69). They are also imminently needed to comply with the Department's decisions in D.P.U. 20-75-B and D.P.U. 22-54 as discussed herein, which established a four-year time frame for the construction of the Project (Company Brief at 68, citing Exh. EV-1, at 68-69). Eversource asserts that the Substation Expansions are needed in the immediate time frame to provide reliable transmission service, and to increase capacity of the EPS in the area to facilitate the interconnection of numerous DER projects (Company Brief at 51; Exh. EV-1, at 51). To allow for the timely and efficient construction of the expanded West Pond and Tremont Substations, Eversource seeks both individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the operation of the Plymouth and Wareham Zoning Bylaws (Company Brief at 53). The Company asserts uncertainty in obtaining local zoning relief and the potential for adverse interpretations, delay, burden and undue expense associated with the local permitting process and related appeals provide the impetus for Eversource's request for exemptions (Company Brief at 53; Exh. EV-1, at 51-52).

c. Analysis and Findings Regarding the Comprehensive Zoning Exemptions

Without the grant of a comprehensive zoning exemption from the zoning requirements of Plymouth and Wareham, the Project may not be constructed in a timely manner, resulting in substantial public harm. The Siting Board has found that there is need for and benefits from the Project. See Section II.C.2.

The record also shows Eversource engaged in outreach activity with the local communities to provide education about the Project and solicit feedback. In October and November 2025, Eversource met with Plymouth officials to provide information on plans for the Plymouth Substation Expansion (Exhs. EFSB-G-2; EFSB-G-2(2); EFSB-G-2(3); see Exh. EV-1(G) for the presentation slide deck). Eversource held additional briefings in May 2025 in connection with its community briefings for residents (Exhs. EFSB-G-2; EFSB-G-2(3); EV-4). Eversource provided information to Wareham officials as well (Exhs. EFSB-G-2; EFSB-G-2(1)). The evidence shows

that the Company provided information to officials from the Town of Plymouth and officials from the Town of Wareham regarding the proposed Substation Expansions and the zoning exemptions requested by Eversource.

The record shows (1) the proposed Project will contribute to a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth, see Section II; (2) the Project is time sensitive, see Section II; and (3) the Company has presented information to local officials to discuss the applicability of local zoning provisions to the Project and any local concerns. Therefore, we find that Eversource's request for comprehensive exemptions from the Plymouth Zoning Bylaws and the Wareham Zoning Bylaws should be granted to facilitate the timely and efficient construction of the proposed Substation Expansions.

6. Conclusion on Zoning Exemptions Required

Eversource has demonstrated that the requested individual exemptions from the zoning bylaws of Plymouth and Wareham are required to construct and operate the proposed Project. In addition, the record shows that the Company has demonstrated that a comprehensive exemption is warranted.

III. SECTION 61 FINDINGS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY

A. Section 61 Findings and MEPA

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act ("MEPA") provides that "[a]ny determination made by an agency of the Commonwealth shall include a finding describing the environmental impact, if any, of the Project and a finding that all feasible measures have been taken to avoid or minimize said impact" and shall consider reasonably foreseeable climate change impacts, including additional greenhouse gas emissions, and effects, such as predicted sea level rise ("§ 61 Findings"). G.L. c. 30, § 61. Pursuant to 301 CMR 11.01(4)(c), § 61 Findings are necessary when an environmental impact report is submitted to the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs ("EEA"); and § 61 Findings should be based on such environmental impact report. Where an environmental impact report has not been required and the Secretary has not required additional review, § 61 Findings are not necessary. 301 CMR 11.01(4).

The record shows that the proposed Project as proposed would not exceed any threshold as listed in 310 CMR 11.03 (1) through (11) and as such did not require MEPA review (Exh. EV-1(R)). In his affidavit, Eversource's witness, Mr. Clancy stated that the proposed Project would not exceed any of the review thresholds and, accordingly, the Project does not require the filing of an Environmental Notification Form with the Secretary (Exh. EV-1(R)). Therefore, the Siting Board need not make § 61 Findings in this proceeding.

B. Environmental Justice Policy

An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, St. 2021, c. 8 ("Roadmap Act") requires an environmental impact report ("EIR") for any project that is "likely to cause damage to the environment" and is located within a distance of one mile of an EJ Population; this distance extended to five miles for a project that impacts air quality. Roadmap Act, Sections 58, 59, amending G.L. c. 30, § 62B. The term "likely to cause damage to the environment" is construed in the related MEPA regulations and EJ protocols to mean project impacts that meet or exceed MEPA review thresholds set forth in 301 CMR 11.03. As previously indicated, the Project does not meet or exceed any Environmental Notification Form or Environmental Impact Report thresholds and did not require an EIR.

With the absence of MEPA filing requirements for the Project, neither the enhanced requirements of the MEPA EJ protocols nor Section 20 of the 2021 EJ Policy are triggered. [24] Nevertheless, the 2021 EJ Policy contains Secretariat-wide General Requirements provisions (Sections 13 and 15, in particular) that are applicable to the Siting Board, and do not depend on a project's MEPA filing status. Section 13 obligates EEA agencies (including the Siting Board) "to develop strategies to proactively promote EJ in ways that are tailored to the agency's mission." Section 15 requires EEA agencies "to establish an inclusive, robust public participation program for key agency actions that focuses agency resources on outreach activities that enhance public participation opportunities for agency activities that potentially affect EJ populations."

[24] The current EEA EJ Policy can be found at Environmental-Justice-Policy version 6.24.2021.

The Roadmap Act includes in its definition of EJ principles, "the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and environmental burdens." St. 2021 c. 8 § 56; G.L. c. 30, § 62. The Roadmap Act amended Section 62 of Chapter 30 to define environmental benefits as "the access to clean natural resources, including air, water resources, open space, constructed playgrounds and other outdoor recreational facilities and venues, clean renewable energy sources, environmental enforcement, training and funding disbursed or administered by the executive office of energy and environmental affairs." St. 2021, c. 8, § 56; G.L. c. 30, § 62. Our analysis of the environmental impacts of the Project confirmed there would be no significant environmental impacts to EJ Populations resulting from the Project. See Section II.C.4. The record shows that the Project as proposed resulting in minimized environmental impacts to both EJ and non-EJ Populations. See Section II.C.4. Permanent impacts to abutters and communities have been minimized and construction related impacts would be mitigated. See Section II.C.4. The record also shows that Project would improve transmission system infrastructure and comply with comprehensive regional plans for maintaining electric transmission reliability in New England, for both EJ and non-EJ Populations. See Section II.C.2. The Project would increase the reliability of electricity service to the nearby EJ Populations. See Section II.C.2. Reliability of electric service constitutes a significant health benefit. Mid-Cape Reliability at 89; see also, Beverly-Salem at 109. In view of the above, the Project would be consistent with the EJ principle requiring an equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and environmental burdens.

Based on an analysis of the proximity of EJ Populations to the proposed locations of the Substation Expansions, the Project does not require EJ enhanced public participation, EJ enhanced analysis, or presumptive language translations and interpretations (Exh. EV-1, at 11). However, Eversource did conduct outreach in Wareham to address community concerns including neighboring EJ Populations within one mile of the Wareham site (Exh. EV-1, at 11).

The Company noted that feedback from Wareham residents during initial outreach efforts included questions about billing and affordability (Exh. EFSB-G-3). In response to those concerns, the Company brought resources from its Environmental Justice, Billing Assistance, and Energy Efficiency teams to support the open house held in Wareham to address the identified community concerns (Exh. EFSB-G-3).

In publicizing the open house, Eversource partnered with two local community-based organizations that provide services for residents in need, Damien's Food Pantry and Turning Point of Wareham, to help spread the word about the open house to their constituents and to participate in the event (Exh. EFSB-G-3). Eversource also sent event invitation postcards to residents within ¼-mile of Tremont Substation and left doorhangers containing event invitations with neighbors in the more immediate vicinity of the Tremont Substation (Exh. EFSB-G-3). The Company also posted flyers with the event information at nearby public locations and ran print and web advertisements in the Wareham Week publication the week prior to the event (Exh. EFSB-G-3).

We encourage Eversource to maintain ongoing community outreach in EJ Populations in or adjacent to the Project area to facilitate the meaningful opportunity to participate by all consistent with the outreach plan presented in Exh. EV-1(I). We note that the Company asserts that the purpose of the expansion projects at West Pond Substation and Tremont Substation are to interconnect new renewable energy resources, create future capacity to accommodate electrification, and improve reliability of the regional transmission grid (Company Brief at 73). In this way, the Company is contributing to the provision of a clean and healthy environment for all people in the Commonwealth and that Eversource's outreach efforts should maintain a focus on meaningful involvement of all stakeholders including the neighboring EJ Populations in the Project. Eversource should continue its outreach which enables two-way communication and collaboration with stakeholders as it had done prior to this petition (see Exh. EFSB-G-3) and as it commits to do moving forward (see Company Brief at 74-75; Exh. EV-1(I)).

IV. DECISION

In Section II, above, the Siting Board finds that: (1) the Company is a public service corporation; (2) the proposed use is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare; and (3) the Company requires exemptions from the Town of Plymouth Zoning Bylaws and the Town of Wareham Zoning By-Laws to construct and operate the Project. The Siting Board finds that a grant of both individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions for the Project is necessary and appropriate, and consistent with G.L. c. 40A, § 3.

Accordingly, the Siting Board [approves] Eversource's Zoning Petition pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3, as described herein, subject to the following Conditions 1 through 12:

1. The Siting Board directs the Company to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including regulations and ordinances, except those from which the Company has received an exemption. The Company shall be responsible for ensuring such compliance by its contractors, subcontractors, and other agents.

2. The Siting Board directs the Company, within 90 days of Project completion, to submit a report to the Siting Board documenting for all conditions contained in this Decision the extent of compliance, noting any outstanding conditions yet to be satisfied and the expected date and status of compliance.

3. The Siting Board directs the Companies to file semi-annual compliance reports with the Siting Board starting within 180 days of the commencement of construction, that include projected and actual construction costs and explanations for any discrepancies between projected costs, actual costs, and completion dates.

4. Because issues addressed in this Decision relative to this Project are subject to change over time, construction of the proposed Project must be commenced within three years of the date of the Decision.

5. In addition, the Siting Board notes that the findings in this Decision are based upon the record in this case. A project proponent has an absolute obligation to construct and operate its facility in conformance with all aspects of its proposal as presented to the Siting Board. Therefore, the Siting Board requires the Company, and its successors in interest, to notify the Siting Board of any changes other than minor variations to the proposal so that the Siting Board may decide whether to inquire further into a particular issue. The Company or its successors in interest are obligated to provide the Siting Board with sufficient and accurate information on changes to the proposed Project to enable the Siting Board to make these determinations.

6. The Siting Board directs the Company to submit the SWPPP or SWPPPs for the West Pond and Tremont Substation Expansions to the Siting Board once it has or they have been finalized.

7. The Siting Board directs the Company to provide Project design updates to the Siting Board at the 60 percent and 90 percent design and include a narrative of how the design meets the MassDEP Stormwater Management

Standards, both for managing stormwater runoff and controlling erosion and sedimentation.

8. The Siting Board directs the Company to make a concerted effort in notifying potentially affected residents near the Project, including providing notices in different formats, such as door hangers, to nearby property owners, and make good faith efforts to implement reasonable visual mitigation for those residents, as appropriate.

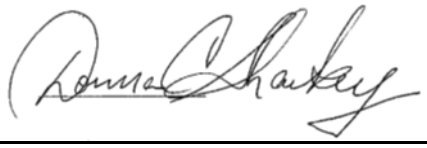
9. The Siting Board directs the Company to implement new Dark Skies compliant lighting, study the feasibility of making the existing substation lighting Dark Skies compliant and submit a report to the Siting Board as part of the 60 percent Project design update.

10. The Siting Board directs the Company to limit construction to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and to the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Should the Company need to extend construction work beyond the above-noted hours and days, with the exception of emergency circumstance on a given day necessitating extended hours, the Siting Board directs the Company to seek written permission from the relevant municipal authority before the commencement of such work, and to provide the Siting Board with a copy of such permission. If Company and municipal officials are not able to agree on whether such extended construction hours should occur, the Company may request prior authorization from the Siting Board and shall provide the relevant municipality with a copy of any such request and authorization, if granted.

11. The Siting Board directs the Company to conduct sound testing for the expanded West Pond Substation within 120 days of the Project's commercial operation and to submit a report to the Siting Board showing consistency with the limits set forth in the MassDEP Noise Policy, including mitigation if the testing results are not consistent with such limits.

12. The Siting Board directs the Company to consult and coordinate with the towns about the truck trips associated with the Project's earth removal operations and provide a report to the Siting Board at least 90 days prior to the start of Project construction, describing any town concerns or identified issues, corresponding mitigation measures, and any subsequent feedback from the towns.

The Companies shall serve a copy of this Decision on the following: (1) the Town Clerk, the Town Manager, the Select Board, the Department of Public Works, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, and the Building Department for the Town of Plymouth; and (2) the Town Clerk, the Town Administrator, the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Department of Public Works, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Conservation Commission, and the Inspectional Services Department for the Town of Wareham. The Companies shall certify to the Secretary of the Department within ten business days of issuance that such service has been made.



Donna Sharkey
Presiding Officer

Dated this 19th of October, 2026

[APPROVED] by a vote of the Energy Facilities Siting Board at its meeting on October 28, 2026, by the members present and voting. Voting [for/against/abstain] the Tentative Decision: Rebecca L. Tepper, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs and Chair, Energy Facilities Siting Board; Jeremy McDiarmid, Chair, Department of Public Utilities; Elizabeth Mahony, Commissioner, Department of Energy Resources; Bonnie Heiple, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection; Thomas O'Shea, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game; Kris Callahan, Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs for the Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health, and designee for Dr. Robert Goldstein, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Douglas Gutro, Director of the Permit Regulatory Office and designee for Eric Paley, Secretary, Executive Office of Economic Development; Michael P. Cahill, Mayor of the City of Beverly, Public Member; Mark Ells, Town Manager, Town of Barnstable, Public Member; and David Weeden, Selectman, Town of Mashpee, and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Public Member; Joe Bonfiglio, Public Member.

_____
Rebecca Tepper, Chair
Energy Facilities Siting Board

Dated this ___th day of October, 2026

Appeal as to matters of law from any final decision, order or ruling of the Siting Board may be taken to the Supreme Judicial Court by an aggrieved party in interest by the filing of a written petition praying that the order of the Siting Board be modified or set aside in whole or in part. Such petition for appeal shall be filed with the Siting Board within twenty days after the date of service of the decision, order or ruling of the Siting Board, or within such further time as the Siting Board may allow upon request filed prior to the expiration of the twenty days after the date of service of said decision, order or ruling. Within ten days after such petition has been filed, the appealing party shall enter the appeal in the Supreme Judicial Court sitting in Suffolk County by filing a copy thereof with the clerk of said court. Massachusetts G.L., Chapter 25, Sec. 5; G.L. Chapter 164, Sec. 69P.