

STAFF SUMMARY


TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director
DATE: January 19, 2022
SUBJECT: Wachusett Watershed Railroad Update



COMMITTEE: Water Policy & Oversight

 VOTE
 X INFORMATION

Matthew R. Horan, Deputy Director, Finance/Treasurer
Preparer/Title



David W. Coppes, P.E.
Chief Operating Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

For information only

DISCUSSION:

At the December 15, 2021 meeting, staff provided the Board with an update on the status of negotiations with CSX related to the improvements to the Worcester Main Line. Since that meeting staff were able to finalize an agreement with CSX that will allow for significant upgrades to the condition of the track, limit speed and provide additional safety monitoring. The agreement focuses on the following six major points:

- Upgrade the tracks from FRA Class 1 to Class 3 and maintain at that level.
- Limit track speeds within the watershed to 25 miles per hour (which is lower than allowed by Class 3 track standards).
- Prohibit parking or idling trains and equipment within the watershed except in limited safety-related circumstances.
- Provide information describing the type and quantity of hazardous material transported with the watershed.
- Provide notice of derailments, spills or releases within the watershed.
- Install monitoring equipment to detect irregularities with railcars including dragging equipment and hot bearing detectors at either side of the watershed.

In addition to these six major points, CSX also agreed to some liability provisions and emergency coordination activities. CSX has agreed to pay all of the costs associated with work included in the agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, MWRA withdrew its request to appear at the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) public hearing, and the request for conditions to be imposed on the transactions. CSX has filed the agreement with the STB and requested that it be imposed as a term of the final approval of the sale of Pan Am to CSX. Under the current schedule, the STB is expected to issue a ruling on the application to purchase Pan Am in April 2022. A copy of the executed agreement between CSX and MWRA is included as an attachment to this staff summary.