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MEPA finalizes GHG policy

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The Mass. Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office has finalized its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions policy (the "Policy") effective May 5, 2010. The Policy applies to all new projects that require an Environmental Notification Form (ENF), an Environmental Impact Review (EIR), any waivers from the filing of an EIR, and some Notices of Project Change (NPC), if the Secretary determines the Policy should apply. The Policy, which requires proponents to quantify the sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to be generated and identify measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate such emissions, focuses on direct and indirect mobile and stationary source emissions associated primarily with energy consumption, vehicle trip generation, and consumption of water or wastewater generation. While carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the primary GHG of concern in the Policy, other GHG emissions may also be required to be reviewed, such as: methane emissions from landfills and wastewater treatment plants, hydro and perfluorocarbon emissions from manufacturing, servicing and disposal of refrigeration and air conditioning equipment and other GHGs emitted from chemical and manufacturing processes. In limited situations, proponents willing to commit in advance to the provision of exceptional GHG-reduction measures may opt-out of the required quantification analysis. Such projects might include: a wind farm or large-scale solar installation where the project consists solely of the generation of renewable energy. Projects that will not have any impact on GHG emissions, such as waterways dredging projects, may not have to meet these requirements, as specified in the Policy's de minimis exemption section.

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