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A new year is a good time to look at how environmental regulations have been updated

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The start of a new year is a good time to look at how environmental regulations have been updated... and how these updates impact real estate development.

New requirements for the Wetland Protection Act's (WPA) Regulations 310 CMR 10.00 went into effect on October 24, 2014. The updates added exemptions for buffer zone activities for certain highway and utility work; added a renewable energy limited project; clarified that new stormwater facilities do not create wetland resources areas; streamlined permitting by allowing for a combined application for projects that fall under the WPA, Chapter 91, and 401 Water Quality Certification; created a general permit for ecological restoration projects; updated stream crossing standards; and simplified permitting for short-term tests of innovative technologies.

Chapter 91 Waterways regulations were updated to streamline the process for projects that also require permits under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and WPA, and simplify the process for small docks (

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