

February 3, 2015

HARRIS BEACH

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

99 Garnsey Road Pittsford, NY 14534 (585) 419-8800

FRANK C. PAVIA

DIRECT: (585) 419-8709 FAX: (585) 419-8811 FPAVIA@HARRISBEACH.COM

Kimberly Merchant, Deputy Regional Permit Administrator NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Region 8 - Division of Environmental Permits 6274 East Avon-Lima Road Avon, New York 14414

Re:

Project Seneca Regional Wastewater Facility SEQRA Negative Declaration Determination

Dear Sir or Madam:

Enclosed please find a copy of the Negative Declaration adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Watkins Glen as Lead Agency for the SEQRA review of the Project Seneca Regional Wastewater Facility to be located in the Village of Watkins Glen. The Negative Declaration was adopted on January 20, 2015.

If you have any questions regarding the enclosed determination, please contact the Village Clerk of the Village of Watkins Glen.

Very truly yours,

Frank C. Pavia

FCP:cms
Enclosures

cc: Donna J. Beardsley, Village Clerk, Village of Watkins Glen





SEQRA RESOLUTION (Project Seneca Regional Wastewater Facility)

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Watkins Glen was convened on January 20, 2015 at 7.00 p.m.

The following resolution was duly offered and seconded, to wit:

Resolution No. 15-01-02

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ISSUING A NEGATIVE DECLARATIONPURSUANT TO THE NEW YORK STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT FOR THE PROJECT SENECA REGIONAL WASTEWATER FACILITY

WHEREAS, the Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls have commenced a joint effort to address the aging wastewater treatment infrastructure in each Village by agreeing to support the construction of the proposed Project Seneca Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (the "Project"), which will provide significant environmental benefits to the region by reducing the current levels of nutrient loading in Seneca Lake; eliminate on-going chlorine usage/discharges and odor concerns at the existing wastewater treatment facilities; improve water disinfection through the use of ultraviolet technology; and present a comprehensive, long-term, and cost-effective solution to the wastewater treatment challenges currently facing both Villages; and

WHEREAS, the Project will further address on-going administrative and enforcement actions concerning the Villages' existing wastewater treatment facilities as undertaken by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation ("NYSDEC"); and

WHEREAS, after a comprehensive analysis of alternative locations for the Project, the Villages have determined that the NYS Canal Corporation's historical Upland Disposal Site ("UDS") 6-25-H located in the Village of Watkins Glen, south of Clute Park, along the Barge Canal (the "Project Site") is the most appropriate location for the Project; and

WHEREAS, a Full Environmental Assessment Form ("EAF") for the Project has been prepared pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA"), Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law and its implementing regulations (6 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 617); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees declared its intent on November 18, 2013 to act as lead agency for purposes of conducting the SEQRA review for the Project; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 6 N.Y.C.R.R. § 617.6(b) of the SEQRA regulations, the Board of Trustees did not receive any objections with respect to it acting aslead agency for the purpose of conducting the SEQRA review; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trusteeshas accepted lead agency status for the Project and conducted a coordinated review of the Project pursuant to 6 N.Y.C.R.R. § 617.4 of the SEQRA regulations; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 6 N.Y.C.R.R. § 617.6(b)(3)(ii) of the SEQRA regulations, the Board of Trustees agreed to extend the time by which it is required to make a determination of environmental significance pursuant to SEQRA until such time as the Board of Trustees concluded that it had received all of the reasonable information it needed to make such a determination; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has completed Parts 2 and 3 of the EAF, and has reviewed the accompanying studies and surveys, as well as comments received from various involved agencies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF WATKINS GLEN AS FOLLOWS:

Upon due consideration by the Board of Trustees of the EAF and supporting documentation, the comments provided by the involved agencies and the public, as well as the surveys and studies completed, the Board of Trustees makes the following findings:

- Section 1. The Board of Trusteeshas considered the Project pursuant to the parameters set forth in 6 N.Y.C.R.R. §§ 617.2(b) and 617.3(g) of the SEQRA regulations.
- Section 2. The Board of Trustees classifies the Project as a Type I action pursuant to the SEQRA regulations.
- Section 3. The Board of Trustees has carefully reviewed the EAF, the criteria set forth in 6 N.Y.C.R.R. § 617.7(c) of the SEQRA regulations, as well as considered the comments received from the involved agencies and the public regarding the Project. Based on the foregoing, the Board of Trustees has thoroughly and comprehensively analyzed the potential relevant areas of environmental concern, and finds that the Project will not result in a potential significant adverse impact on the environment for the following reasons:
- (a) <u>Land.</u> The Project will not have a significant adverse impact on land. The Project Site will occupy a relatively small footprint of approximately 4.8 acres. Avoidance and minimization of potential impacts during construction will result from elevating the Project Site and structures above the current 100-year flood plain effectively reducing the depth of excavation and associated dewatering efforts, as well as the use of drilled-power support systems, rock piles, floating slabs, common-walled tanks and buildings, earth and fill, and overhead insulated pipe support systems for construction purposes. The Project will also not result in the modification or destruction of any unique or unusual land forms (e.g., cliffs, dunes, fossils, caves) or other significant land resources.
- (b) <u>Air Quality.</u> The Project will not present a potential significant adverse impact on air. The Project will not include a state regulated air emissions source.

(c) <u>Water Resources.</u> The Project will not result in a potential significant adverse environmental impact to water quality. To the contrary, the Project will present a significant benefit to the water quality of Seneca Lake and its tributaries by substantially reducing and/or eliminating nutrient loading into Seneca Lake and the usage/discharge of chlorine. The Project will also provide tertiary treatment resulting in a cleaner discharge than either of the existing Village wastewater treatment plants currently produce. Wastewater disinfection will substantially improve through the use of ultraviolet technology and the elimination of chemical disinfection, and will effectively eliminate over 2,800 pounds of chlorine discharging into Seneca Lake annually.

The Project will include a new effluent outfall pipe into the Barge Canal, located approximately 4,500 feet south of the Barge Canal's confluence with Seneca Lake. The new outfall's location will offer better assimilative capacity and mixing prior to entering Seneca Lake, and will discharge effluent meeting the tertiary standards for the Barge Canal, Class C, CT (water). This new outfall will be subject to a new State Pollution Discharge Elimination System ("SPDES") permit to be obtained from NYSDEC and maintained by the Village of Watkins Glen. As a result of the Project, the two (2) existing wastewater treatment plant outfallslocated at the Barge Canal (Montour Falls) and Seneca Lake (Watkins Glen) will be permanently removed.

In addition to the SPDES permit, the Project will be subject to coverage under NYSDEC's General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities (GP-0-10-001) and an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan. Although portions of the access road (approximately 1.3 acres) will be located within a 100-foot regulated area adjacent to New York State wetlands and within the regulated boundary of NYSDEC Wetland MF-1 (approximately 0.22 acres), the Project will be subject to a Nationwide Permit as maintained by the US Army Corps of Engineers and a NYSDEC wetland permit process including the wetland mitigation regulations set forth in 6 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 663. The proposed mitigation for the 0.22 acres of permanent wetland encroachment will include the creation of 0.22 acres of emergent wetland near the south end of the Project Site as acquired from the NYS Canal Corporation. This replacement action represents a 1:1 ratio of impacted wetland areas for newly-created wetlands. As a result, the Project will not result in a potential significant adverse environmental impact to wetlands, but, to the contrary, will represent a significant improvement in the water quality of the Barge Canal and Seneca Lake.

- (d) <u>Traffic and Transportation.</u> The Project will not have a significant adverse impact on existing traffic and transportation levels. Although traffic patterns surrounding the Project Site will be modified, they will not result in a change to the existing transportation system, and will be further offset by the substantial reduction of traffic flow in the areas of the existing wastewater treatment facilities upon their decommissioning.
- (e) <u>Noise.</u>The Project will not result in significant levels of noise resulting in an adverse impact to the surrounding areas. Numerous measures will be utilized to avoid and/or minimize noise levels at the Project Site. Aeration system blower intake and exhaust pipes will be insulated with sound attenuating material and other silencers installed in the equipment.

Exterior equipment, such as an emergency generator, will include sound attenuating enclosures and will be positioned in the central portion of the Project Site. The addition of supplemental vegetative screenings, as well as the undisturbed forested buffers that already exist and will remain around the Project Site, will further dampen noise decibel levels that may migrate off the Project Site. Lastly, the pumping station generators the main pumping stations in Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, respectively, will include a soundattenuating enclosure to minimize and avoid noise impacts to the surrounding areas.

- (f) Odor. Although there may be occasional odors generated by the Project, any potential odors will be minimal and fluctuate depending upon facility processes and climatic conditions. The Project has been designed to include odor control treatment systems for both the pump stations and the wastewater treatment plant, which will minimize and avoid the development of odors. The Project has also been designed to implement odor control steps to avoid and minimize significant odor impacts, including the usage of aerobic waste treatment and sludge digestion processes, the construction of an odor control system at the facility's headworks and solids dewatering buildings, and the implementation of operational measures to minimize and control odor emissions, including (but not limited to) increasing the frequency of sludge and scum removal and eliminating odorous accumulations by adjusting chemical treatment to various treatment components.
- (g) <u>Solid Waste.</u> The Project will not result in a significant increase in the generation of solid waste.
- (h) <u>Erosion.</u> The Project will not have a significant adverse impact on soil resources resulting in erosion. All activities at the Project Site will be subject to coverage under the General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities (GP-0-10-001) pursuant to the applicable NYSDEC stormwater permitting requirements. A site-specific stormwater pollution prevention plan ("SWPPP") and an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will also be implemented for all construction activities.
- (i) <u>Vegetation and Wildlife.</u>The Project will not result in a potential significant adverse impact to existing vegetation and potential wildlife located on, and in the vicinity of, the Project Site. The Project will not present a potential adverse impact to a variety of listed or rare animal and vegetative species noted in the region. As a result of field studies conducted at the Project Site, the Project is not anticipated to adversely impact populations of *least bittern*, *pied-billed grebe*, *long-tailed salamander*, *marsh horsetail*, *nodding wild onion*, *Leiberg's panic grass*, *northern wild comfrey*, *spreading globeflower*, *or Leedy's roseroot*. Furthermore, although the Project Site falls within the range of the northern long-eared bat, no confirmed roosts were located on or adjacent to the Project Site. Nevertheless, the construction plans for the Project have been designed to ensure that all necessary tree clearing activities will be confined to the period between October 1 and March 31, when northern long-eared bats are in hibernation.

The Project and Project Site have also been configured to avoid construction of permanent structures within 450 feet of anactive bald eagle nest site observed near the eastern edge of the Project Site in December 2013. This location was recognized as an active nest for a

pair of bald eagles in the summer of 2014. Bald eagles are no longer listed as a federal endangered or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, but are still afforded certain protections under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Therefore, any disturbance of the bald eagles does require permit authorization from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and NYSDEC. The layout of the Project Site has been modified multiple times to propose a footprint that would have a minimum impact on the eagles, the nest location, and the surrounding environment. Due to the size and configuration of the Project, temporary construction activities and construction of permanent infrastructure cannot be avoided within 660 feet of the bald eagle nest. However, short term, long term, temporary and permanent impacts that the Project may have upon the eagles and their nest have been considered, and site plans have been designed to ensure the integrity of the existing nest locationand that any potential impacts to the bald eagles and their habitat are minimized and avoided to the maximum extent practicable.

The construction of an artificial nesting platform was completed within the Catharine Creek Wildlife Management Area (the "WMA") during the 2014 non-breeding season. The Project will also be subject to a Net Conservation Benefit Planas part of NYSDEC's permitting requirements, which will establish a list of actions that when cumulatively undertaken will avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to the eagles and the nest. These specific actions include (but are not limited to) the posting of "no trespassing-restricted area" signage; restricting site preparation activities to occur during the eagle's non-breeding season (mid-September -December) during 2015 and 2016; installing temporary construction screening along the eastern boundary of the Project Site to provide additional visual screening from the nest location; postconstruction monitoring of eagle activity near the Project Site and within the WMA; and coordination with the Finger Lakes Land Trust to locate and support an active bald eagle nestinglocation that may require preservation due to a pending threatin order to provide a further conservation benefit to the bald eagle species existing within the Finger Lakes region. Although impacts or disruptions to the eagles may not, in fact, occur due to the Project, the collective implementation of the measures summarized above (and more specifically outlined in the EAF), as well as the improvement of the water quality of Seneca Lake resulting from the Project which should further support the regional bald eagle species, shall avoid and/or minimize significant potential adverse impacts to the bald eagles to the maximum extent practicable.

(j) <u>Critical Environmental Area.</u> The Project Site is located at the edge of the WMA, which was designated as a critical environmental area by Schuyler County in January 2010. The Project Site does not fall within the footprint of the WMA, but will disturb approximately 4.8 acres of land previously disturbed by the NYS Canal Corporation as located along the WMA. While this represents the loss of wooded habitat that may support local woodland and edge-oriented songbirds, such habitat is abundant throughout the region and Northeast. The Project Site acreage therefore represents a minor loss that is not expected to have a measurable or significant impact on local bird populations, habitat availability, or the integrity of the WMA. Further, the site plan for the Project includes maintaining an undisturbed buffer between the Project Site and the open marsh. Lastly, the function of the Project is to protect and improve water quality which will provide a substantial benefit to local waters on which wading and marsh-nesting birds depend, thus creating improvements in the functions and values for which the WMA was established.

Aesthetic and Historical Resources. The Project will be located on an undeveloped parcel along the east side of the Barge Canal which was historically used for upland disposal by the NYS Canal Corporation. The Project represents a new land use in its proposed location that will provide some visual impact on the surrounding properties and the general viewsheds associated with the adjacent road networks and recreational activities in the area. However, as the result of the design elements of the Project, potential negative visual impacts have been minimized and avoided to the maximum extent practicable consistent with maximization of the public's enjoyment and appreciation of the Barge Canal and the WMA. Vegetative screenings of the Project Site from land uses to the west with woody plantings that will provide fast growth and a dense growth habitat will screen the view of the Project from the Barge Canal, the Watkins Glen Central High School, and the Catharine Valley Rail Trail. An undisturbed vegetative buffer will remain to the east of the Project Site and will be supplemented by the installation of the vegetation screen in areas of meadow-field communities. The vegetative buffer will permanently screen the Project Site from the viewpoint of the WMA and viewpoints along Rock Cabin Road.

Buildings to be located on the Project Site will be of a neutral, earth-tone color in order to blend in with the natural backgrounds, and rooflines will remain below tree-top height. Exterior finishes and building architecture and roofs will resemble those found in the surrounding area, and will attempt to resemble a marina type facility or similar nautical use facility currently located in the vicinity of the Project Site.Light impacts will also be minimized by utilizing source shielding in exterior lighting for structures to ensure that light sources are not directly visible from residential areas, the Barge Canal, and adjacent streets. Motion sensors or timers will also be employed on outdoor light fixtures to minimize lighting periods when personnel are accessing Project structures.

The Project Site is also located in an archaeologically sensitive area. A Phase 1A report was completed which indicated that the Project had very low potential for impacts to possible archaeological deposits. Additional Phase 1B testing will be completed for the portion of force mains located along the high school property, and portions of the Montour Falls force main that fall within well-drained alluvial soils. Flexibility has been built into the site plan designs for the Project so that force main routes may be adjusted to avoid any areas of archaeological significance identified through the Phase 1B site investigation. All archaeological tests and reports will be submitted to the NYS Office of Parks-Recreation and Historic Preservation for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction. As a result, the Project does not present significant potential environmental impact to the aesthetic and historical resources that may exist within the surrounding areas.

- (l) <u>Energy.</u> The Project will not result in an adverse impact to energy. It is not anticipated to cause an increase in use of any form of energy.
- (m) <u>Agricultural Resources</u>. The Project will not result in an adverse impact to agricultural resources and/or established agricultural districts located in the region. No agricultural lands currently exist at the Project Site.

- (n) Open Space and Recreational Uses. The Project Site is currently used for hunting and nature observation purposes being located along a certain portion of the WMA. The Project Site, however, which will occupy a relatively small footprint of approximately 4.8 acres, will not result in a significant reduction in open space or recreational lands. Although the Project may present a potential impact to recreational archery hunting, both by reducing available natural habitats and through restricting the discharge of a long bow within 100-feet and discharge of a cross bow within 200-feet of a wastewater treatment plant building, this represents a very small reduction of available hunting area, and does not significantly limit archery hunting opportunities within the WMA. Because the discharge of firearms within the Village of Watkins Glen municipal boundaries is prohibited, the Project will not impact hunting with firearms at the Project Site.
- (o) <u>Public Health.</u> The Project will not create a hazard to public health. To the contrary, the Project will present a significant improvement to the environment and, in particular, the water quality of Seneca Lake, which will also indirectly improve public health. The construction of the Project, and the force main from the Watkins Glen pump station have been configured to avoid impacts to the existing Watkins Glen Central High School. Moreover, the design of the collection and treatment functions of the Project will address any potential health and safety risks to sewer operators which may arise from elevated levels of hydrogen sulfide gases. As a result, the Project will not present a potential significant adverse impact to public health and safety.
- Growth and Community Character. The Project will not have a significant (p) adverse impact on the character of the community or neighborhood. The Project is consistent with the Village of Watkins Glen and the Village of Montour Falls' comprehensive plans which note the opportunity to consolidate wastewater treatment facilities in a location between the two Villages. The construction design of the one-story wastewater treatment plant headworks/control building and two pump station control buildings will be typical of the existing structures that are visible along the Barge Canal, including the existing Watkins Glen and Montour Falls' Yacht Club boat houses, the Walmart store, the Watkins Glen Central High School, and other commercial/industrial developments located within both Villages. The Project (as previously discussed) will include natural vegetation screening and differential site grading to shield the Project Site from the surrounding areas and Barge Canal boat traffic. As a result of the decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatments plants in the Villages, the Project will create a significant positive impact on the character and aesthetics of the south shore of Seneca Lake. Relocation of the Watkins Glen wastewater treatment plant creates an opportunity to recapture the economic value of the land along the shores of Seneca Lake and will allow for additional public access to this important community recreational and water resource. Lastly, decommissioning of the Montour Falls wastewater treatment plant also creates an opportunity to remove unsightly treatment facilities from the key entryway to the Barge Canal in Montour Falls and to improve the character of this area. Therefore, the Project does not represent a potential significant adverse environmental impact to growth and community character, but, in fact, represents a potential significant benefit to improving the community character and public access to natural resources located in the Villages.

Based on the foregoing, and the additional analyses set forth in Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the EAF, the Board of Trustees finds that the Project will not have a potential significant adverse impact on the environment in accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, Article 8 of the New York Environmental Conservation Law, and, in particular, pursuant to the criteria found at 6 N.Y.C.R.R. § 617.7(b) of the SEQRA regulations. The Board of Trustees therefore issues a Negative Declaration for the Project pursuant to SEQRA.

Section 5. This Resolution has been prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the New York Environmental Conservation Law by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Watkins Glen, 303 North Franklin Street, Watkins Glen, New York 14891. Additional information regarding this Resolution may be obtained from Donna J. Beardsley at the Village of Watkins Glen's offices, telephone number (607) 535-2736.

The Board of Trustees further directs that notice of this resolution shall be Section 6. filed and circulated to the extent required by any applicable ordinance, statute or regulation.

Section 7. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

The question of the adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote on roll call, which resulted as follows:

	Yea	Nay		Absent		Abstain	
Mayor R. Mark Swinnerton, Jr. Deputy Mayor Scott Gibson Paul Clifford Kevin Smith Anthony Fraboni		[[[[[## 	<i>Abs</i> [[[[ent]]]]	Ab :	<i>stain</i>]]]
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The Resolution was thereupon duly adopted.

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I, Donna J. Beardsley, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of the Resolution adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Watkins Glen at its January 21, 2015 meeting.

Donna J. Beardsley

Clerk/Treasurex

Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 3 - Evaluation of the Magnitude and Importance of Project Impacts and Determination of Significance

Part 3 provides the reasons in support of the determination of significance. The lead agency must complete Part 3 for every question in Part 2 where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.

Based on the analysis in Part 3, the lead agency must decide whether to require an environmental impact statement to further assess the proposed action or whether available information is sufficient for the lead agency to conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse environmental impact. By completing the certification on the next page, the lead agency can complete its determination of significance.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

To complete this section:

- Identify the impact based on the Part 2 responses and describe its magnitude. Magnitude considers factors such as severity, size or extent of an impact.
- Assess the importance of the impact. Importance relates to the geographic scope, duration, probability of the impact occurring, number of people affected by the impact and any additional environmental consequences if the impact were to occur.
- The assessment should take into consideration any design element or project changes.
- Repeat this process for each Part 2 question where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where
 there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse
 environmental impact.
- Provide the reason(s) why the impact may, or will not, result in a significant adverse environmental impact
- For Conditional Negative Declarations identify the specific condition(s) imposed that will modify the proposed action so that
 no significant adverse environmental impacts will result.
- Attach additional sheets, as needed.

Please refer to the attached Part 3 FEAF Supplemental Information, which evaluates the magnitude and significance of potential project impacts.



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	Determinatio	n of Significance	- Type 1 and	Unlisted Actions	
SEQR Status:	Y Type I	Unlisted			
Identify portions of	EAF completed for this P	roject: Part I	Part 2	Part 3	

and consid	lering both the magnitude and importance of each identified potential impact, it is the conclusion of the Village of Walkins Glen as lead agency that:
Ø A. T	his project will result in no significant adverse impacts on the environment, and, therefore, an environmental impact need not be prepared. Accordingly, this negative declaration is issued.
B. A substantial	Ithough this project could have a significant adverse impact on the environment, that impact will be avoided or ly mitigated because of the following conditions which will be required by the lead agency:
There will, declaration	therefore, be no significant adverse impacts from the project as conditioned, and, therefore, this conditioned negative is issued. A conditioned negative declaration may be used only for UNLISTED actions (see 6 NYCRR 617.d).
C. T	his Project may result in one or more significant adverse impacts on the environment, and an environmental impact must be prepared to further assess the impact(s) and possible mitigation and to explore alternatives to avoid or reduce the accordingly, this positive declaration is issued.
Name of A	ction: Project Senecs Regional Wastewater Facility
Name of L	ead Agency: Village of Walkins Glan
Name of R	esponsible Officer in Lead Agency: Mr. Mark Swinnerton
Title of Res	sponsible Officer: Mayor, Village of Watkins Glon
Signature o	f Responsible Officer in Lead Agency:
Signature o	f Preparer (if different from Responsible Officer)
For Furthe	er information:
Contact Per	Son: Village of Walkins Glen
Address: 30	13 North Franklin Street, Watkins Glen, NY 14891
Telephone 1	Number: 607-535-2736
E-mail: ville	geclerk@watkinsglen.us
For Type 1	Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a copy of this Notice is sent to:
Chief Execu	utive Officer of the political subdivision in which the action will be principally located (e.g., Town / City / Village of) wed agencies (if any)

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