

# Boston Groundwater Trust

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Elliott Laffer

August 8, 2014

Katelyn Sullivan  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1007

**Subject: Boston University Center for Integrated Life Sciences and  
Engineering Building**

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Expanded Project Notification Form for the Center for Integrated Life Sciences and Engineering Building. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the City where the integrity of building foundations, especially those supported by wood pilings, is threatened by lowered groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. As such, my comments are restricted to groundwater related issues.

The EPNF includes a proposal for a new Center for Integrated Life Sciences and Engineering Building located at 610 Commonwealth Avenue. As stated in the EPNF and in the scoping session the project is not located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District. Therefore, it is not required to comply with Article 32 of the zoning code. I was pleased to see that even though the proponent is not required to comply with Article 32 of the zoning code, the project will be designed to infiltrate one-inch of stormwater runoff from impervious areas into the ground.

While the location of the proposed building is not in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District which extends to the other side of Commonwealth Avenue, it appears that the project may be located on, or very close to, made land. At the scoping session the proponent acknowledged that the adjacent Morse Auditorium, constructed in 1904 as one of the first buildings on this section of Commonwealth Avenue, may be supported on wood pilings. The Trust recommended a test pit be dug to determine the type of foundation that is supporting the Morse Auditorium. The proponent stated they will likely research the foundation of the Morse Auditorium and share what they find with the Trust.

The EPNF stated that the proposed building does not consist of any levels below grade and that no basement is planned. Also, that the excavation will not extend below the groundwater table, which according to data obtained from the on-site monitoring well, is approximately 10 to 12 feet below grade, or about Elevation 8 to 10 BCB.

I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to assure that the project can have only positive impacts on groundwater levels in the area.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer  
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pederson, BRA  
Maura Zlody, BED