

Boston Groundwater Trust

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December 5, 2011

Mr. Geoffrey Lewis, Senior Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1009

Subject: One Canal

Dear Mr. Lewis:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Project Notification Form for One Canal. 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 is threatened by low groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. Therefore, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

As noted in the PNF, the project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District. In the Bulfinch Triangle portion of the GCOD, projects are not required to install recharge systems; however, those that trigger the applicability of GCOD, as One Canal does, are required to demonstrate that they will not cause a reduction in groundwater levels on site or on adjoining lots. The PNF acknowledges the need for this certification. As the zoning requires, the certification should bear the stamp of a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts. Because the project will be seeking Planned Development Area zoning that would eliminate the need to appear before the Board of Appeals, this certification should be in place before the new PDA zoning is approved.

While much of the project is above the MBTA tunnels, a portion is not and appears to include some underground space. The PNF refers to underslab drainage to protect a below-grade parking level. Because elevations are not detailed on the drawings included in the document, it is unclear what the level of the drainage is planned to be. The certification should make clear what plans are in place to assure that this drainage will not cause a reduction in groundwater levels.

I appreciate the commitment of the project to coordinate with the Trust and to monitor groundwater levels at existing nearby wells before, during, and after construction.

I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to assure that the project cannot have negative effects on area groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED