

January 19, 2005

Secretary Ellen Roy-Herzfelder
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Attn: MEPA Unit
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Subject: Pier 4, EOEPA Project 12433

Dear Secretary Roy-Herzfelder:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Final Environmental Impact Statement concerning this project. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the city where buildings supported on timber pilings are threatened with foundation failure when falling groundwater levels expose the pilings to air and to make recommendations for overcoming the problem. As such, our comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

The project is located on the South Boston waterfront, not far from where there have been reports of foundation problems in the Fort Point Channel area. In its current configuration, there is no underground use likely to cause any drawdown of groundwater levels. The project includes a three level underground garage. If groundwater were to leak into the garage and be removed to either the harbor or the BWSC sewer system, this could have the effect of lowering the groundwater level in surrounding areas, an effect that can extend for blocks. Therefore, we request that the project be required to have a registered professional engineer certify annually that no groundwater has been removed from the site to either the harbor or to the sewer system. In addition, to make sure that no groundwater depression is taking place, we ask that adequate monitoring wells be installed in areas adjacent to the site at locations to be determined in consultation with the Trust, that water level readings during construction be provided to the Trust, and that the wells be accessible to the Trust for continued monitoring after project completion.

We look forward to working with you and with the project proponent to assure that the Pier 4 project has no adverse impact on sensitive groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director