



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Stephanie Pollack, Secretary & CEO
Thomas J. Tinlin, Acting Administrator



April 15, 2015

The Honorable Patricia D. Jehlen
Massachusetts State Senate
State House, Room 424
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Jehlen:

I am writing in response to the City of Somerville Board of Alderman resolution Docket #198702 (see attached) which requests "that the state delegation make every effort to secure funding and achieve the installation of sound proof barriers along I-93, which would curb fine particle pollution." The noise generated by traffic throughout the state is of concern to us as well. As a result, we participate in two noise abatement programs that approach the problem in an equitable manner consistent with state and federal regulations, policies and guidelines.

The first program is the Type I Noise Abatement Program. This program covers noise barrier construction coincidental with newly constructed highways, substantial realignment or an increase in the number of through travel lanes. Because work such as this is not currently proposed in this area, a Type I barrier is not appropriate.

The Type II Noise Abatement Program involves the construction of "retrofit" noise barriers along Massachusetts' Interstate Highway System. In order to prioritize these projects, MassDOT, in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), completed a noise attenuation study of neighborhoods along Interstate Highways that are seriously impacted by the noise generated from highway traffic. The noise attenuation study included only Interstate Highways because traffic noise is a function of traffic volumes and traffic speeds. At the conclusion of the study, a Type II Priority List of 53 locations was established based primarily on the severity of the noise impacts. Unfortunately, the neighborhood cited in the resolution did not qualify for inclusion on the Type II Priority List because it is not among the most severely impacted locations. The noise study completed for the Type II program remains valid and further Type II noise studies are not proposed at this time.

In accordance with State and Federal Policies, Guidelines and Regulations, MassDOT is not able to consider noise abatement for neighborhoods that do not fit the description of either the Type I or Type II Noise Abatement Programs. In addition, noise barriers, when reasonable and feasible, are only designed to protect highway abutters from highway noise not "fine particle pollution."

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I thank you again for your interest in this matter. If you have any questions, comments, or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact James Cerbone at 857-368-8792 or james.cerbone@state.ma.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Tinlin', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Thomas J. Tinlin
Acting Administrator
MassDOT Highway Division

cc: The Honorable Christine Barber
The Honorable Tim Toomey
The Honorable Denise Provost

Attachment



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Docket # 198702

Resolution

Resolution

Regular Meeting, March 26, 2015

Item ID 11263

SUMMARY: That the State Delegation secure the funding and achieve the installation of sound proof barriers along I-93, which would curb fine particle pollution.

COMPLETE TEXT:

That this Board of Aldermen hereby requests that the State Delegation make every effort to secure the funding and achieve the installation of sound proof barriers along I-93, which would curb fine particle pollution.

SPONSORED BY: Ald. McLaughlin

RESULT: APPROVED

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MA, AT A REGULAR MEETING ON THE 26th DAY OF MARCH, 2015.

ATTEST:

John J. Long, City Clerk