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State and Federal Environmental Officials Announce Settlement in Coal Tar Processing Facility Case

BOSTON – Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles today joined officials of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in announcing a \$300,000 settlement of Natural Resource Damage (NRD) claims related to the release of oil and other pollutants from an Everett coal tar processing plant into the Island End River.

Under the terms of an administrative settlement agreement executed by NOAA with support of the Commonwealth, three responsible parties – National Grid NE Holdings 2 LLC; Honeywell International, Inc.; and Beazer East, Inc. – have each paid \$100,000 to settle their NRD liability for injury to fish and other estuarine resources. NRD is a category of legal damages defined by various state and federal statutes which provides compensation for injury to, destruction of, or loss of natural resources, including the reasonable costs of a damage assessment. As Natural Resource Trustees for this matter, Secretary Bowles and NOAA's designee will use settlement funds for restoration and to reimburse Trustee damage assessment costs.

From the late 1890s until approximately 1960, Beazer East, Honeywell International, and National Grid and/or their predecessors owned and/or operated the coal processing facility in Everett, and processed, stored and distributed coal tar and related products from the site.

Following a complaint of an oil sheen on the Island End River in 1984, state and federal environmental agencies conducted investigations at or near the coal tar processing site and gathered evidence of decreases in fish abundance and diversity and elevated concentrations of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in river sediments. Fish species alleged to be harmed by PAHs and other contaminants include alewife, winter flounder, striped bass, and mummichug.

The Trustees propose to commit the restoration funds toward completion of additional salt marsh restoration adjacent to Oak Island, which will complement an ongoing 4.1-acre mitigation project that National Grid, Honeywell, and Beazer East are performing in the same area.

“Along the Mystic River watershed, pockets of nature such as streams and riverbanks provide residents with a respite from the urban landscape,” Secretary Bowles said. “The restoration project that will result from this settlement is meant to compensate the public for years of pollution, and, as Trustee of the Commonwealth’s natural resources, I look forward to its completion.”

[Click here for more information about the NRD process and cases.](#) Or visit NOAA’s web site at <http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/island/index.html> .

Restoration is being achieved through the cooperative efforts of the NRD Programs of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and NOAA. Trustee representatives responsible for administering the funds for restoration include EEA NRD Program Director Dale Young and NOAA representatives Ken Finkelstein and Eric Hutchins.