



Minnesota Department of Transportation

District 8 - Willmar
2505 Transportation Road
Willmar, MN 56201

June 1, 2015

EQB Monitor Distribution List and Other Interested Parties

RE: Negative Declaration on the Need for an Environmental Impact Statement for the TH 23 Passing Lanes from I-90 to Willmar Project.

To Whom It May Concern:

The Trunk Highway (TH) 23 Passing Lanes from I-90 to Willmar Project constructs approximately 10 miles of passing lanes along a 140-mile corridor of TH 23 from I-90 to Willmar in southwest Minnesota. The project area encompasses five counties and includes 10 passing lane segments at six locations throughout the corridor. The primary purpose of the project is to improve highway mobility and safety by offering safe passing opportunities for vehicles traveling behind slower moving traffic.

Under Minnesota rules, the Minnesota Department of Transportation is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for this project. The proposed action was described and analyzed in a State Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). The EAW was circulated to the EAW Distribution List and other interested parties. A Notice of Availability appeared in the EQB Monitor on February 16, 2015. A public hearing/open house meeting was held on February 24, 2015. The comment period closed March 18, 2015.

A thorough analysis of the project and its potential impacts was completed by MnDOT. Through its own analysis, coordination with affected agencies, public involvement, and comments received, MnDOT has determined that the proposed TH 23 Passing Lanes from I-90 to Willmar Project as described in the EAW and the Findings of Fact and Conclusion (FOF&C) does not have the potential for significant environmental impact. On June 1, 2015, MnDOT concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required, and as a result has issued a Negative Declaration Order for the project. This decision and determination is supported by the full administrative record of the project, including the FOF&C. The Negative Declaration concludes the Minnesota state environmental review process. A split project letting is planned for February and May of 2016 and substantial completion of construction is planned for fall/winter 2016.

An electronic copy of the FOF&C document and other project related items are available on the project website at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d8/projects/hwy23passinglanes/index.html>.

To request a hardcopy of the FOF&C document, please contact the contact person listed below.

Contact Person for Questions about the Proposed Project:

Susann Karnowski, P.E.
Minnesota Department of Transportation, District 8 – Willmar
2505 Transportation Road, Willmar, MN 56201 Phone: 320.214.6370
Email: susann.karnowski@state.mn.us

An Equal Opportunity Employer

