



Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative

Tier 1 Environmental Assessment & Finding of No Significant Impact

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) conducted a feasibility and planning study – the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNEIRI) – that examines the opportunities and impacts of adding more frequent and higher speed intercity passenger rail service on two major rail routes, the Inland Route and the Boston-to-Montreal Route (the NNEIRI Study). The Inland Route runs between Boston, Massachusetts and New Haven, Connecticut via Springfield, Massachusetts. The Boston-to-Montreal Route runs between Boston and Montreal, Quebec via Springfield. The two routes share trackage between Boston and Springfield, Massachusetts, and are collectively identified as the NNEIRI Corridor.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) provided grant funding to MassDOT and VTrans for the NNEIRI Study. The NNEIRI Study defines and evaluates a Build Alternative for implementing improved passenger rail service in the NNEIRI Corridor; identifies and evaluates the potential environmental effects of railroad infrastructure and service improvements necessary to increase train speed and frequency; forecasts ridership and revenue; and estimates capital and operating costs.

In June 2016, MassDOT and VTrans, in coordination with FRA, completed a Tier 1 Environmental Assessment (EA) for the NNEIRI Study in accordance with the [National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 \(NEPA\)](#), the NEPA implementing regulations, 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, and [FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts](#), 64 FR 28545 (May 26, 1999).

Based on the information presented in the [Tier 1 Service-Level EA](#), FRA signed a [Finding of No Significant Impact \(FONSI\)](#) on July 14, 2016.