



Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Agency of Natural Resources

WATER INVESTMENT DIVISION
National Life Building, DAVIS 3
1 National Life Drive
Montpelier, VT 05620-3510
FAX: (802)828-1552

AJ Johnson, Town Administrator
Authorized Representative
Town of Highgate
PO Box 189
Highgate, VT 05459

9/11/2026
Expiration Date: 9/11/2031

**Re: Highgate New Community Wastewater System
Vermont/ USEPA Clean Water Revolving Loan Number RF1-292
Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) Grant Number GT-25SPC-00021**

Notice of Intent to Issue a Finding of No Significant Impact

Dear AJ:

The Department of Environmental Conservation intends to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Highgate New Community Wastewater System Project.

The project has positive environmental impacts consisting of constructing a new wastewater collection and treatment system in Highgate to replace existing wastewater systems that may have reached the end of their useful life. This will help to mitigate any potential environmental or public health impacts associated with failed wastewater systems.

This project additionally involves impacts including a new discharge to groundwater and construction on a brownfields site.

Otherwise, this project may have been eligible for Categorical Exclusion from detailed environmental review; additionally, the direct and indirect environmental effects of the project are still not significant enough to necessitate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The Department's environmental review procedures require a 30-day public comment period following the issuance of a Notice of Intent to Issue a Finding of No Significant Impact. If no public comments received during that period demonstrate that this Notice of Intent is in error, then the Finding of No Significant Impact will become effective.

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Copies of documents supporting a Finding of No Significant Impact are enclosed. Please keep copies of the enclosed documents, along with any pertinent reports by your consulting engineers, available for public inspection during a public comment period of 30 days. A full list of the documents that must be available for public inspection is attached. Please call (802) 490-6226 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

B268524B1357446...

Lynnette Claudon, PE
Sr Water Infrastructure Program Engineer
Water Investment Division

Enclosures

Documents Posted for Finding of No Significant Impact Public Comment Period (30 days)

1. Notice of Intent to Issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (Signed by Emily Bird, Director, Water Investment Division, enclosed.)
2. Evaluation of Eligibility for Finding of No Significant Impact (Approved by Emily Bird, Director, Water Investment Division, enclosed.)
3. State Environmental Review Procedures for Projects Funded Through the Vermont/ EPA Revolving Loan Program, <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/srf/environmental-review>

Additional Documents Needed for Finding of No Significant Impact Public Comment Period (30 days)

4. Contracts 1 and 2 Environmental Information Document titled "*Environmental Report and Environmental Information Document*", signed 7/30/2026, by Eric DePhillips.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=221490&DVID=0>
5. Contract 3 Environmental Information Document titled "*Environmental Report and Environmental Information Document*", signed 7/30/2026, by Eric DePhillips.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=221491&DVID=0>

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6. Environmental Information Document Attachments by Otter Creek Engineering.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=220836&DVID=0>
7. Preliminary Engineering Report entitled "*Community Wastewater Preliminary Engineering Report*", and dated June 2021, by Otter Creek Engineering.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=208120&DVID=0>
8. Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) addendum entitled "Preliminary Engineering Addendum No. 3 Report", and dated April 15, 2024, by Otter Creek Engineering.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=208119&DVID=0>
9. Project Review Sheet dated 1/6/2026.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=220834&DVID=0>

COPY LIST

Scott Dillon, Division for Historic Preservation, ACCD
Robert Clark, PE & Eric DePhillips, PE, Otter Creek Engineering
Greta Brunswick, Northwest Regional Planning Commission
Nate Kie & Achouak Arfaoui, Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division, VT-DEC
Kathleen Taft, ANR OPLA
Clare O'Connor, PE, Environmental Protection Agency Region 1
Andrea Smith, Northern Borders Regional Commission
Austin Rizzo, Clark Group



Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Agency of Natural Resources

Department of Environmental Conservation
Water Investment Division
1 National Life Drive, Davis 3
Montpelier, VT 05620

(802) 522-3562

Notice of Intent to Issue a Finding of No Significant Impact

**Town of Highgate
New Community Wastewater System**

Vermont/ USEPA Clean Water Revolving Loan Number: RF1-292
Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) Grant Number GT-25SPC-00021

In accordance with section VII of the Department's *"Environmental Review Procedures for Projects Funded Through the Vermont/ EPA Revolving Loan Program"*, the Department of Environmental Conservation intends to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed New Community Wastewater System Project. Contract 1 of this project involves the construction of a new wastewater disposal system of up to 20,000 gpd on the Wright Property in Highgate, VT. Contract 2 involves the construction of a new Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) wastewater system. For contract 3, a gravity sewer service will connect each home to the STEP tank located on each private property.

Under the Procedure, the project is ineligible for Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) from detailed environmental review. The project involves impacts including a new discharge to groundwater and construction on a brownfields site and therefore exceeds the threshold for CATEX.

Also, the direct and indirect environmental effects of the project are not significant enough to necessitate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), under the Department's environmental review procedures. The project will not increase the current permitted flow capacity of the treatment plant, and the project will not include sewer extensions.

Consideration of the FONSI included a review of the following documents:

- **Contracts 1 and 2 Environmental Information Document (EID)** by Eric DePhillips, PE, of Middlebury, VT. <https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=221490&DVID=0>
- **Contract 3 Environmental Information Document (EID)** by Eric DePhillips, PE, of Middlebury, VT <https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=221491&DVID=0>

**Town of Highgate
New Community Wastewater System
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Further information on the project and this Notice of Intent is available for inspection at the following locations:

AJ Johnson, Town Administrator
Town of Highgate
PO Box 189
Highgate, VT, 05459

tel. (802) 868-4922
townadmin@highgatevt.org

Lynnette Claudon, PE
Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Water Investment Division
1 National Life Drive, Davis 3
Montpelier, VT 05620-3510

tel. (802) 490-6226
Lynnette.Claudon@Vermont.gov

(Note: National Life requires photo identification to obtain an access badge for entry.)

Robert Clark, PE
Otter Creek Engineering
404 East Main Street
Middlebury, VT, 05753

tel. (802) 382-8522
Clark@ottercrk.com

No significant administrative action will be taken on this project for thirty (30) days from issuance of this Notice of Determination, to allow for public response.

Signed by:

Emily Bird

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Emily Bird, Director
Water Investment Division

9/11/2026

Date

Department of Environmental Conservation
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

MEMO

TO: Emily Bird, Director, Water Investment Division

Initial
EB

FROM: Lynnette Claudon, PE
Senior Water Infrastructure Program Engineer, Water Investment Division

DS
LL

SUBJECT: Town of Highgate
New Community Wastewater System Project

Evaluation of Eligibility for Finding of No Significant Impact

DATE: 9/11/2026

A. Project Identification

Project Name: Town of Highgate
New Community Wastewater System

Address: AJ Johnson, Authorized Representative
Town of Highgate
PO Box 189
Highgate, VT, 05459

Project Location: Town of Highgate, Vermont
The Highgate Community Wastewater System project involves the construction of a wastewater disposal system of up to 20,000 gpd at the Wright Property and the construction of a new Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) system. The Wright Property is located off Lamkin Street and the STEP system will be constructed on Lamkin Street, Saint Armand Road, and Gore Road. This project is located in Highgate, VT, in the Missisquoi Tactical Basin Planning Watershed.

Vermont/ USEPA Clean Water Revolving Loan Number: **RF1-292**

Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) Grant Number: **GT-25SPC-00021**

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B. Summary of Environmental Review

The Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Investment Division, has reviewed this proposed project in accordance with the Department's State Environmental Review Procedures for Projects Funded Through the Vermont/ EPA Revolving Loan Program.

The Department has reviewed the following planning documents:

- Contracts 1 and 2 Environmental Information Document titled "*Environmental Report and Environmental Information Document*" and dated 7/30/2026 by Eric DePhillips.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=221490&DVID=0>
- Contract 3 Environmental Information Document titled "*Environmental Report and Environmental Information Document*" and dated 7/30/2026 by Eric DePhillips.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=221491&DVID=0>
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- Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) addendum entitled "Preliminary Engineering Addendum No. 3 Report", and dated April 15, 2024, by Otter Creek Engineering.
<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/IronPIG/DownloadFile.aspx?DID=208119&DVID=0>

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is the appropriate environmental review response for this project if the issues presented can be resolved with mitigation or permits. This project is not eligible for Categorical Exclusion from detailed environmental review due to potential impacts including a new discharge to groundwater and construction on a brownfields site. Also, the project's direct and indirect environmental effects do not necessitate issuance of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), consistent with the criteria as described in section XI of the Department's environmental review procedures.

1. Project Description

The Town of Highgate is located in Franklin County, Vermont in the Missisquoi major watershed.

Contract 1 of this project involves the construction of a new wastewater disposal system of up to 20,000 gpd on the Wright Property in Highgate, VT. Contract 2 involves the construction of a new Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) wastewater system. For contract 3, a gravity sewer service will connect each home to the STEP tank located on each private property. The Highgate Village Center includes a layout of small lots which include water and wastewater systems that likely do not follow

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isolation standards and may have reached the end of their useful life, potentially posing a public health threat. The project will construct a new wastewater collection and treatment system in Highgate to replace existing wastewater systems that may have reached the end of their useful life. This will help to mitigate any potential environmental or public health impacts associated with failed wastewater systems.

This work is expected to be constructed with Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan.

Eligibility for clean water revolving loan (CWSRF) construction funding will be limited to the eligible clean water work as detailed in the Preliminary Engineering Report and to physical areas cleared through this environmental review process.

The contract documents will contain standard requirements to limit hours of construction and to control noise, dust and discharges of stormwater runoff or pollutants during construction.

2. Justification for Finding of No Significant Impact

We have determined that the proposed project meets the criteria for issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact.

This project involves potential environmental impacts including a new discharge to groundwater and construction on a brownfields site.

Mitigation measures include:

1. **Dust and Noise:** Practices to limit these impacts will be required, such as regular sweeping, erosion prevention and sediment control measures, or water application, and work will be limited to normal 7 am to 5 pm weekday working hours.
2. **Contaminated Soils Management:** If required by DEC Sites Management Section, the Town will submit a Soils Management Plan to DEC for review and approval for the wasting, transportation, and disposal of any identified contaminated soil materials. Additional measures include alternative pipe materials to address potential incompatibility. Include the use of bentonite dams, to preclude migration of affected groundwater through pipe bedding.
3. **Historic Preservation:** The project area includes archaeologically and historically sensitive areas. Additional investigation may be necessary, and further mitigation measures may be required by VDHP as part of the Section 106 consultation. Interested entities need to comment to be included in the consultation of the mitigation measures.

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Otherwise, this project may have been eligible for Categorical Exclusion from detailed environmental review; additionally, the direct and indirect environmental effects of the project are still not significant enough to necessitate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Specifically, the project will not increase the design hydraulic capacity of the wastewater treatment plant by more than 20 percent, and it will not increase the design organic treatment capacity (equivalent population served) by more than 30 percent. The project does not include sewer extensions.

The project will not create a new permanent discharge of stormwater or treated wastewater to surface waters or groundwater, and there will be no increase of effluent pollutant loadings (pounds per day) permitted to be discharged from associated wastewater treatment plant.

A public hearing will be held on a October 1, 2026 during the regular 6:30 pm Selectboard meeting by the Town of Highgate as part of this FONSI process.