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From: "Brochu, Jill" <JBroc94@entergy.com>
To: <arw1@nrc.gov>
Date: 05/30/2006 8:04:48 AM
Subject: PNPS License Renewal - Environmental

Alicia,

Good Morning. I am attaching a newspaper article regarding the status of the spotted turtle in Massachusetts. The spotted turtle had been a species of special concern for Massachusetts which had the potential to occur at PNPS. The state National Heritage program has voted to remove the spotted turtle from the category of species of special concern due to the population is much larger than originally believed. This would in turn make any discussion of the turtle unnecessary, including any previously listed significant and/or priority habitats located on the PNPS site.

If you would like additional information, please let me know.

Thank you.

Jill Brochu

CC: "Ellis, Douglas" <dellis1@entergy.com>, "BUCKLEY, RICKY N" <RBUCKLE@entergy.com>, "Scheffer, Jacob" <JScheff@entergy.com>, "Mogolesko, Fred" <fmogole@entergy.com>

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Created By: JBroc94@entergy.com

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entergy.com

fmogole CC (Fred Mogolesko)
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THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

State votes to remove spotted turtle from special protection list

 Associated Press

May 23, 2006

BOSTON --The spotted turtle is endangered no more.

The state's Fisheries and Wildlife Board voted Tuesday on a proposal to remove the spotted turtle -- the small, dark green reptile protected by the state since 1986 -- from its list of "species of special concern."

Wildlife officials decided to review the reptile's rare species status after it began popping up all around Massachusetts in recent years.

The seven-member board voted five in favor, with one abstention and one member absent, said Vanessa Gulati, a spokeswoman for the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. It remains illegal to collect or sell the spotted turtle, Gulati said.

When the turtle was classified as a "species of special concern," it was known to live in only 24 locations throughout the state. Since then, the turtles have been seen in more than 960 locations -- including 259 of Massachusetts' 351 municipalities, according to state's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

The turtle has become a symbol for anti-development forces, with people citing its presence to try to halt unwanted development. It is blamed for delaying mixed-use development in Holbrook and curtailing a multimillion-dollar golf course in Hopkinton.

Many environmentalists have pushed to keep the spotted turtle on the state's endangered species list, as well. The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions feared that the habitat of the turtle will decline with increased development, threatening the continued viability of the species.

The group conducted a letter-writing campaign to urge officials to keep the spotted turtle on the list.

But the state disagreed, saying scientific evidence showed the spotted turtle is widespread in Massachusetts and many sites have been protected and will remain so after the turtle is taken off the list. ■

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