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Drug abuse fears bedeviled connector's construction

By **Dave Wedge**
Boston Herald Chief Enterprise Reporter
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Officials in charge of construction on the Interstate 90 Seaport connector tunnel where **Milena Del Valle** was killed repeatedly expressed fears that subcontractors on the job were skipping out on mandatory drug tests, documents obtained by the Herald show.

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Managers from the Federal Highway Administration and Modern Continental, which built the tunnel, were so concerned about possible drug use by tunnel workers that it became a topic of discussion during monthly meetings at least four months in a row during 2001.

Internal meeting agendas for July, August, September and October 2001 obtained by the Herald list "drug testing" as a topic under the category "safety and health issues." The memo also notes: "Subcontractors are of primary concern."

A high-ranking **Big Dig** official who requested anonymity said officials were concerned that "subcontractors weren't showing up where they were supposed to be peeing in the cup."

Substance abuse issues have long plagued the Big Dig.

In 2001, the \$14.6 billion project took on the nickname the "Big Swig" after TV cameras caught several Big Dig hardhats chugging beers on the clock in downtown bars.

In September 2005, the Herald found that dope-sick Big Dig workers, including truck drivers, were hitting the methadone clinic before heading to the job site. One of the drivers hauled stone for Aggregate Industries.

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Big trouble: Dig drivers violate law; Methadone prohibited by federal drug rules

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 Author: DAVE WEDGE
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Abstract (Document Summary)

The Herald reported this week that many Big Dig workers hit the methadone clinic before heading to the job site. Among them was a trucker for Camdele Trucking spotted getting methadone several mornings before hauling stone in an 18-wheeler for Aggregate Industries, a company that supplies the Big Dig with concrete. Aggregate spokeswoman Nancy Sterling said Camdele officials are responsible for the driver. Camdele officials did not return a call.

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