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Comments: As a young adult setting down roots here in Rutland County, I've come to love the forests and my animal neighbors whom I live by, just like I love my family and friends and human neighbors whom I live with - that's why I can't believe a project as reckless as this is being proposed.

In the midst of a climate crisis, the Telephone Gap Project would destroy not just some of the homes of the endangered northern long-eared bats (which rely on large, old trees within the project area for roosting and raising young) and one of Vermont's two remaining pine marten populations who lives here, but countless other critters, not to mention taking the lives of almost 11,000 acres of old forest.

There's a circle of life I can respect: cutting down trees is part of that when done respectfully and when it's needed. But harming the homes of endangered species is not "improved wildlife habitat", treating trees and around water with glyphosate (an herbicide that is toxic to aquatic life, and that the EU is in process of banning by Dec 15 2023) is not "restored soils and wetlands", this is reckless destruction of life.

We have a responsibility to our animal and plant neighbors to treat them with respect. We have a responsibility to our human families and neighbors in the midst of a climate crisis to not worsen it by cutting down old forests who are proven to hold more carbon than young forests.

If hundreds of scientists and climate groups, as mentioned below, are saying that reckless logging is a huge risk to the world climate-wise, and that we need old forests to survive the climate crisis, then a project such as the Telephone Gap Project that plans to log 11,000 acres of old forest is a doomed project.

If there are needs here that need to be met, we have to reconsider and find another way to meet them.

Some quotes from my linked sources:

Many scientists in an "Open Letter to President Biden and Members of Congress" say: "As hundreds of climate and forest scientists warned Congress [in 2020], logging in U.S. forests emits 723 million tons of uncounted CO₂ into our atmosphere each year-more than 10 times the amount emitted by wildfires and tree mortality from insects combined. Greenhouse gas emissions from logging in U.S. forests are now comparable to the annual CO₂ emissions from U.S. coal burning, and annual emissions from the building sector. Most of the carbon in trees removed from forests through logging is emitted almost immediately, as branches and tree tops are burned at biomass energy facilities, and mill residues are burned at the sawmills, typically for energy production-emitting more CO₂ than burning coal, for equal energy produced. Logging conducted as commercial "thinning," under the rubric of fire management, emits about three times more CO₂ than wildfire alone." These scientists make a call to action: "We urge Congress to move in the opposite direction by shifting from more logging toward natural climate solutions that store carbon in mature and older forests and allow naturally regenerating forests to continue growing for greater carbon accumulation.": https://johnmuirproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ScientistLetterOpposingLoggingProvisionsInBBB_BIF4Nov21.pdf

In a report prepared for the Climate Forests Coalition, a group of over 100 climate groups including Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity, the Telephone Gap Project is featured as one of "10 of the worst logging projects in federal forests". The report says, "The Green Mountain National Forest is a significant carbon sink, with carbon stocks increasing 48% between 1990 and 2013. The forest is recovering from overcutting and land clearing for agriculture in the late 1800s and early 1900s. With most trees now reaching 80 years and older, as well as less logging, the forest is rapidly accumulating carbon and could store two to four times more carbon if allowed to grow old." It also says, "The Forest Service claims this logging proposal is needed to create early

successional habitat and produce timber. Early successional habitat in the Green Mountains is created naturally by wind, ice, beavers and, rarely, fire. Old forests with large trees, abundant dead and downed wood, and natural canopy gaps create diverse habitat for Vermont's native species, reduce the risk of downstream flooding, improve water quality, and sequester and store significant amounts of carbon. The Forest Service should target younger trees if it wants to increase early-successional habitat.": https://www.climate-forests.org/_files/ugd/73639b_03bdeb627485485392ac3aaf6569f609.pdf

Northern Long-Eared Bat is endangered: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/11/30/2022-25998/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-endangered-species-status-for-northern-long-eared-bat#h-4>

Glyphosate approval in EU expires December 15, 2023: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/glyphosate>

"On 30 May 2022, ECHA's Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) agreed that the current harmonised classification of glyphosate should be retained (i.e. as causing serious eye damage and being toxic to aquatic life)": https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/pesticides/approval-active-substances/renewal-approval/glyphosate_en