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Comments: I am writing in opposition to the proposed logging operation in the Telephone Gap region of the Green Mountain National Forest. The intact nature of the GMNF makes it an important wildlife corridor, and the impacts of logging will disrupt habitat for numerous species, including the endangered Northern Long-eared Bat. Additionally, considering that this region is home to the headwaters of both the White River and Otter Creek, logging poses a threat to numerous regional watersheds, from the Connecticut River to Lake Champlain. Communities downstream from such a logging operation may be at increased risk for flooding in the future and would be dealing with contamination and pollution for years to come.

Last year, President Biden issued an Executive Order for the preservation of mature and old-growth forests, which protect native biodiversity and provide a degree of carbon sequestration that newer plantings cannot match. If we are serious about surviving the effects of climate change, we cannot afford to cut mature woodlands and old-growth forests. It is imperative that these landscapes remain intact if we are to thrive in the future.

I am an avid hiker and two-time Long Trail End-to-End backpacker. Every time I have traveled through the woodlands near Telephone Gap and Chittenden Reservoir, I've been struck by their integrity and the sense of solitude one finds there. It is one of the sections of the Long Trail with the least human impact, and extensive logging will do a disservice to this valuable recreation area. As better-known recreation areas become overcrowded and overused, we should be doing everything we can to preserve and highlight alternative sites for outdoor recreation, and the Telephone Gap region offers a prime opportunity to reduce impacts on other trails and sites around the region.

The 2006 plan to log this area is out of date and must be reevaluated before any cutting occurs. Please protect this irreplaceable natural resource. Thank you for your time.