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Comments:

The Telephone Gap timber sale has been called one of the ten worst projects in the U.S. by Climate Forests, a national coalition of 120 environmental groups. This massive and highly destructive logging job would devastate an area larger than the entire City of Burlington. It would endanger the water quality of Chittenden Reservoir, introduce invasive species, and destroy habitat needed by threatened and endangered species.

The areas proposed for logging have major concentrations of trees between 80-160 years old, which science shows accumulate and store the most carbon in the fight against climate change compared to young trees. The GMNF has greater carbon density than most forests in the Eastern US; we should manage this public land for the benefit of the climate and biodiversity, not cut it down.

The largest 1% of trees store 30% of all aboveground forest carbon in the US. We should not be spending our tax dollars to subsidize cutting old trees. Our children and grandchildren alive today will bear the brunt of the climate catastrophe that is happening all around us. The International Panel on Climate Change states that time is running out for action. On the global scale, forest protection represents approximately half or more of the climate change mitigation needed to hold temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Research also shows that New England's forests could store two to four times more carbon if we just let them grow old. Letting these old trees stand is one of the most effective things that Vermonters can do. We must put our public forests on a different path.

I'm writing to ask the USFS to rethink the use of our forests in the light of their role in cooling our planet and to modify the management plan for this area and all USFS forests in their protection. The forest products that come from our forests must be performed by other resources so our forests can help us with the existential problem of climate change. When you put forest products on a scale with fighting climate change, it's not even close - we must stop cutting our forests and burning things and that should start with the Telephone Gap Management Plan.