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Comments: I write to oppose the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project, #60192.

The proposed project would include 2,500-acres of logging in one of Vermont's largest unprotected wildlands, a 16,000-acre "inventoried roadless area" that straddles the Long Trail and the crest of the Green Mountains south of Brandon Gap. As a result it would endanger the water quality of Chittenden Reservoir, introduce invasive species, release vast amounts of carbon to the atmosphere, and destroy habitat needed by threatened and endangered species including the Northern Long-eared Bat.

If the Forest Service's proposal moves forward, it would bring the total amount of land recently approved for logging on the Green Mountain National Forest to over 50,000-acres. This is an exponential increase over the past few decades.

Today, just 0.3% of New England forests are older than 150 years. Old forests are exceptional for sequestering and storing vast amounts of carbon, protecting water quality, and mitigating droughts and floods. They are vital to protect biodiversity.

Telephone Gap has been called one of the worst logging projects on federal public lands by Climate Forests, a national coalition of 120 environmental groups.

Please do not allow this proposed project to go forward.