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Comments: Dear USDA Forest Service:

Vermont is my favorite State. I have spent happy hours hiking in its wonderful National Forests. I call on you to cancel the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project .

This proposed project flies in the face of the need to mitigate climate change with all of the resources at our disposal, and the trees in this project area are sequestering and storing carbon -- naturally and for free. Trees are the only mechanisms available today to take carbon out of the air at a scale that has any significance compared with the size of the problem -- there are no technological "fixes" at this point that have anywhere near the capability of doing this at a meaningful scale.

President Biden recently called for a cessation of logging of older trees above 80 years old, and the proposed project area includes major concentration of trees from 80 to 160 years old. But all trees, after about 20 years of age, sequester and store carbon, and it has been scientifically demonstrated that the older they get, the more they store throughout their life, which can run into the next century and potentially beyond that. Cutting the trees in this project will destroy a huge amount of sequestration capability, which cannot be replaced for decades, as even if trees regrow on the site, trees in their first couple decades are net carbon emitters. It is an absolute travesty and an assault on the future of America, to cut down the trees proposed for logging in this project. America needs to do better in the fight against climate change - and withdrawing this project is the way to begin.

Vermont's National Forests are also treasured for their beauty and their recreational and health benefits. They are visited by many who do not live in the State, as I, regretfully, do not -- but these National Forests belong to ALL Americans. They should be treated as the national treasures that they are., and employed in the national effort to mitigate climate change.

Nearly one quarter of the area proposed to be logged is located inside the Pittenden Inventoried Roadless Area. It is totally unacceptable for this area to be logged. Forest Service Roadless Areas are part of America's national treasures -- they should be protected as such. They are a critical element of the 30 by 30 Initiative, which is intended to protect 30% of America's natural areas and green open space by 2030. The area should become a designated Wilderness Area.

Please, Forest Service, revise your way of operating to encompass the needs and challenges of today -- foremost among them being climate change. The forests that you manage are such a crucial part of the picture for their mitigation capability - do not squander these values to the detriment of the future of America.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Wilma Frey