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Comments: I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project.

This massive logging project of almost 12,000 acres in the Green Mountain National Forest includes major concentrations of mature forest and seems to be in complete disregard of the rapidly accelerating climate crisis of Global Warming. Mature forests are exceptional for sequestering large amounts of carbon and for mitigating floods and droughts which is especially important considering Vermont's recent history with severe flooding. Mature forest are also extremely important, of course in providing habitat to maintain biodiversity.

Research published by the University of Vermont in the journal Forest Science in 2011 showed that New England forests could store 2-4 times more carbon if we just let them grow old. Letting mature trees stand is one of the most effective things that Vermonters can do to limit climate change and extinction. Furthermore, 96% of the timber supply in Vermont comes from private lands so protecting mature forests on public lands would have little impact on the timber products industry.

In 2022 President Biden, in Executive Order 14072, called on the appropriate federal agencies to complete an inventory of old growth and mature forests on federal land for the purpose of protecting these forests. The Forest Service is now committed to a nationwide Forest Plan amendment process that will update agency stewardship of mature and old-growth forests. The Telephone Gap project should be put on hold until this process is completed in early 2025.