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Comments: I strongly endorse and lend my full support to the following petition to extend the comment period. I do so not only for the critical need to fully include indigenous voices in the process but also to allow for a much richer and deeper involvement by people of all origins and backgrounds regarding such a large, complex, and impactful project. The Telephone Gap Project is not just another logging proposal; it is a precious opportunity to reconsider how we relate to our public forests and the manifold benefits they provide to humans and all other living beings on planet Earth.

TO: U.S. Forest Service, Green Mountain National Forest Service, Rochester VT, Deb Haaland, US Secretary of the Interior, Senator Bernie Sanders, Senator Peter Welch, Rep Becca Balint

Whereas Vermont's Indigenous People hold unique insights and millennia old knowledge about protecting Mother Earth and our Other Than Human Kin for whom we are moral and legal guardians;

And Whereas the United States supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as of December 16, 2010 with President Obama's declaration;

And Whereas UNDRIP calls for "full, informed and prior consent" from Indigenous Peoples for projects impacting their well-being and cultural integrity:

And Whereas Vermont is the home of four state recognized Abenaki bands, many unenrolled Native people, and numerous federally recognized tribal enrollees whose full, informed and prior consent has not been provided for concerning the impact of a massive 12,000 acre Telephone Gap Forest Logging Plan and how it may impact cultural sites;

And Whereas the Telephone Gap Forest Logging Plan contravenes Vermont's Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act (2023) that announced intentions to increase protected landscapes and habitats thereby enhancing biodiversity:

We, on behalf of Vermont's Indigenous Communities and our Allies, request that the current review and comment process and deadline of April 8, 2024 be extended by 180 days so that the above issues can be addressed.