

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/6/2024 4:00:00 AM

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Comments: I write to convey grave concerns about the climate, biodiversity, and health and safety impacts of the proposed Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project.

The Telephone Gap timber sale has been called one of the worst logging projects on federal lands by Climate Forests, a national coalition of 120 environmental groups. This highly destructive logging job could impact thousands of acres of mature forests up to 160 years old. It would endanger the water quality of the White River and Otter Creek, put downstream communities in greater danger of flooding, risk introducing invasive species, and destroy habitat for threatened and endangered species.

On Earth Day of 2022, the Biden administration issued an important and historic Executive Order directing the U.S. Forest Service to conserve mature and old-growth forests to benefit the climate and biodiversity. The Forest Service manages the majority of mature and old-growth forests on federal lands and has an especially important role to play in helping to recover old-growth forest ecosystems in regions of the country where few exist, like New England. The Forest Service is currently planning to start implementing the goals of the Executive Order and a project like Telephone Gap would undermine those goals.

The Green Mountain National Forest is a bastion of biodiversity, a reservoir of clean water, a carbon-storage warehouse, and a refuge for people seeking to reconnect with nature. For the benefit of our climate, our communities, and biodiversity, please abandon or significantly modify the Telephone Gap Modified Proposed Action to protect all nature and forests, as well as roadless forests that are critical for clean water and wildlife.