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Comments: As a Vermont resident, I am writing to oppose the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project.

This project claims to "provide resource and public benefits" that include "improved wildlife habitat, restored soils and wetlands, a sustained network of roads and trails, increased recreation opportunities, and timber harvesting to provide wood products for the local and regional economy while enhancing forest health and diversity". This characterization of the project by the US Forest Service is misleading and inaccurate; in addition this project breaches the trust and stewardship placed in the agency by Vermonters and US citizens alike, and degrades some of our most rare and important public forests in Vermont.

The destruction of intact, wild, mature and old-growth forests on our public lands in Vermont should not even be under consideration. Neighboring states, including New York state, have laws banning timber harvesting on public lands - and these laws have followed the science that shows that disturbing mature and old-growth forests is not beneficial, contrary to the claims made by the agency regarding this project.

It is not in the interests of Vermont residents, nor of US citizens, to have these forests degraded through timber harvest, road construction, and the many other negative impacts of the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project. Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, as well as Vermont Representative Becca Balint, have both signed letters recently requesting that the US Forest Service protect mature and old-growth forests, such as the ones that would be disturbed and destroyed in this project.

Logging in the Green Mountain National Forest does not provide any significant economic benefit or serve any critical need either - it accounts for just 1% of the volume of Vermont's annual timber harvest. In addition, here in Vermont we have a vanishingly small amount of mature and old-growth forest that is intact. Both logic and scientific evidence indicate that these forests should be protected: for carbon sequestration, biodiversity, erosion control, and the myriad of other ecological services and value they provide.

This project is not a requirement; it is not a necessity; It is a choice, and there is no justification that outweighs the lasting and permanent degradation of these important forests by approving the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project.

This project should not be approved and the forest should be allowed to continue existing without intervention.