

Good morning and thank you for your tireless and often thankless work as a state rep..

Please do what you can to sunset 248a and move toward a more locally-empowered process or at least one like act 250 applying to telecom projects. The exemptions and lack of normal process that telecom projects have in Vermont is a glaring exception to what has often been our proud relatively transparent and locally-accessible democratic process here in Vermont.

Here in Rochester we have faced a tower proposal, prospected by verizon and vertex corporation, denied by many landowners but finally their dangling tens of thousands of dollars attracted one retiring resident. After a year of hearing from neighbors who would be affected he decided he wanted out of the deal but could not exit due to the fine print of the ageemwnt he signed. The town has little local say even though "substantial deference" is supposed to given to our town plans and boards. The boards are busy and took up the process late in the game.

The entire process is weighted toward corporate control and the choice of a tiny state board.

So here we end up - like so many areas of the state - looking at the likely prospect of a 5200' steep (30-45% grades) new road blasted into one of the last intact high watersheds in the state - Roger's brook - all to erect a 140' tower which duplicates cell service already offered by at and t in the village from a small non visible tower in the church. Verizon says this is needed to renewable vehicles can be charged at the charging station in town when a free WiFi hot spot would do that for 1/30,000th of the cost. Where we ALREADY HAVE EC FIBER internet service and have for years. I send this to you now on my phone on a WiFi router via fiber with zero bars of "service."

This is not about safety. Small cells on power poles are superior of connectivity and are done in other actually progressive areas of the world like th alps.

It makes no sense to climate an flood resilience, to economy, to viewshed protection, to anything but a gravy train of state and federal tax dollars which pay these companies to do such crazy senseless and destructive massive projects. This will requires 200+ dump truck trips of gravel just for the road, (the tower and pad a whole other project with dozens of trips, multiple tons of carbon emissions just for those components), likely the largest project in the valley ever since the railroad in the late 1800's, which also washed out in flood events.

This is the kind of senseless egregiously expensive and environmentally disastrous project you'd think would happen somewhere else, but not in Vermont.

Please, 248a is not a new blunder, Vermont's deserve a better process.

Best

Ben

Moretown and Rochester

Also did not mention:

This project violates our town plan in numerous ways and after over a year both town boards eventually wrote a letter saying this. But they were way behind in the process and now we'll see if the PUC does indeed give "substantial deference" to town plans - if it does the PUC would ask the petitioner to change major aspects of it including proving why they can't site it not on a mountaintop or why said coverage couldn't be provided in various other manners.

Given 248's track record, their push back on big telecom to change the project to fit the clearly defined town plan (with its OWN SECTION devoted entirely to telecom project siting) is unlikely, but certainly hoped for.