

To: VT Public Utilities Commission

Re: Appeal of Certificate of Public Good, ITW Radio Tower Willoughby Lake (Case No. 24-1755)

Historically, Vermont has stood tall among states with landmark actions and legislation protecting the environment. A ban on billboards, a shoreline protection act, and the first statewide rule regulating wakesports on our inland lakes immediately come to mind. Vermont's beauty is legendary and Willoughby Lake symbolizes all that we supposedly value and protect. Nearly every week I receive yet another article touting the beauty and serenity of Willoughby Lake - declared by the federal government as a National Natural Landmark in 1967 just five years after the program was instituted and the only lake in the state of Vermont so designated. I write today to ask that you help protect our viewshed by supporting the community's appeal to overturn the PUC's certificate of public good for a massive radio tower to be constructed by Industrial Tower and Wireless (ITW).

I personally know many folks around the lake who have used ambulance services for emergency transport to a local hospital over the years. Yet in my many decades on the lake, I've never heard anyone speak of an incident in which reaching emergency services was a problem. As an aside, several years ago I made a call to 911 in an area where there was no cell coverage at all. Two speeding cars had passed ours on Rte 100 and rounding a curve, one had flipped over into a ditch. My call to 911 wasn't answered but my phone rang almost immediately after the failed call and I was speaking to emergency services. I know our technology has us covered even when we can't access Tick-Tok.

Cell coverage in Westmore was inadequate for many years. There was a time when making calls or checking on email required a trip north on Rte 5A to a ridge where it was possible to pick up a signal. But residents, property owners, and visitors didn't mind much. They didn't come to Westmore and Willoughby Lake because of high speed phone, cable, or internet access. They come because it is a unique, breathtakingly beautiful place where they can step away from the cacophony of life elsewhere. I think most would agree now that current service is adequate if not excellent.

The Town of Westmore has made it perfectly clear where it stands on towers like the one proposed by ITW - in its Town Plan, its Telecommunications Ordinance, and in letters to the PUC from the Select Board and Planning Commission. And the community has made its position clear in its well developed arguments as an intervenor. I urge you to do what you can to support Westmore's efforts to appeal and revoke the PUC's Certificate of Public Good which serves commercial interests at a cost unacceptable to our community.

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