

## **A Vermonter's Comments on extensions for Section 248a:**

*Something HAS to change and continuing the status quo just doesn't cut it.*

My family and I, as well as our neighbors who intervened with us, have been through a nightmare fending off the tower industry. Ever since my second child was born four(!) years ago and my daughter was 6, the wireless communications industry (in our case "ITW") invaded the peace in our historic rural neighborhood of Bordoville in Enosburg and disrupted our lives in the most stressful of ways. It pitted neighbors against neighbors because it offered one landowner the chance at having a passive form of income while it posed a serious and looming threat to many other landowners such as my family. Having a tower next to our home would not only depreciate our property's value but it would impact our children's and our elderly neighbor's health, not to mention the historic character and natural beauty of our rural neighborhood. Even though the scientific proof is everywhere we aren't allowed to fight for the health and safety of our children in these cases, we are only allowed to talk about the impact it has, and does have, to our scenic beauty and historic character. In that first case, ITW tried to move swiftly through the "process" and spread propaganda that the proposed tower would bring cell phone service to its neighbors.

It was only two months after giving birth to my son that we received that first letter from ITW where they were trying to erect a 140 foot radio tower some 500 feet from our home in a peaceful woodland neighborhood. It took an incredible amount of effort that my newly postpartum mind and body was not prepared for: we had to run around the neighborhood to inform people about what was happening because only abutters received letters (half of which were deceased as we found out) and not everyone own their homes nor was everyone lining the landowner's property; we had to attend meeting after meeting at the local select board and local planning commission level in fact to *inform them*(!) of their role and DUTY to be a part of the process; we had to attend and fight for our right to have a say in the matter at the regional and PUC levels; and then, after having been forced into a corner, our small neighbor intervening group had nothing left to do but hire an attorney AND private contractors to do things like perform expert photography since none of us were ever invited to or notified to be involved in the ITW balloon tests to begin with.

None of us knew what was going on and we didn't have any understanding of the process, but tread water none-the-less to stay afloat and fight for what we believed to be the right course of action for what it meant to be for the "Public Good". We finally got the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to SEE our perspectives, side with us, and make their recommendation to deny the tower at the PUC hearing.

That was the FIRST time, and ITW was denied the approval for the Public Good certificate somewhere around March of 2024. Even as they took it to the highest level at the second court of appeal, they were *still* denied. And *yet....*ITW has come back at the end of 2025 to RE-APPLY for a tower in the same spot only 20 feet shorter than before yet not any less intrusive, obsolete, and without evidence that any sub-contractors will sign on (*especially* at a height this same company claimed last time would not be sufficient enough to provide space for subcontractors. Now, my son is 4 and my daughter is 10, and we have to go through the entire upheaval of a process AGAIN. Already we have sat in on two select board meetings at the local

Enosburg level to try and urge them of their role and duty in this process, to which nothing has come of that and it seems that even our local town plan with its support to NOT have towers so easily erected is still not showing sway in this process. Why is it up to the locals to show the town select board and planning commissions their role in such processes? Why aren't applications for towers BIG news plastered everywhere for the entire town to know about and weigh in *well in advance* of the application process? How is it possible we have gotten to the point where gargantuan metal towers can litter the scenery and yet billboards are still not allowed? How is it the case in the approval process for intrusive and obsolete technologies that locals have to ice pick their way to even get their word in but big companies plow through without a hurdle to jump? It is like allowing these companies to come in and say, "It works because we say it does so no one needs to stop us, and even if you try we will breeze through the process because it is easy for us to do so based on your systems in place".

What I have witnessed is the ease of which big-tech companies can come into beautiful Vermont, the state that bans billboards, mind you, and simply spray the hillsides with ugly towers that are simply technologies of the past yet once installed stay here for 99 years. **The process that allows these companies to do such a thing is flawed and NEEDS TO BE FIXED.** I am not the expert to tell you what is wrong with this process, but what I do know is that it has to be made easier for the locals to know about what is going on, to be a part of the process, and to have a say, and not in the industry's favor (the attempts to go through these processes quickly and without public knowledge or timely input is scary to say the least).

Thank god for the non profit, Vermonters for a Clean Environment, for without it literally NO citizen would even have a word in edgewise.

The reason you probably aren't seeing more public comments on this issue is because people probably don't know this is even happening, people are busy just trying to get by, and busy trying to fight off these towers that are being erected next to their homes - that doesn't mean people are *not* against what is happening - *because we are*. Too many of us are against the staggering numbers of towers being put up and applied for in this state. There are a lot of us out here who are against the ease of which wireless industries have in putting up these towers. We didn't want billboards and the state of VT agreed, we don't want towers so where is our voice now? There is satellite communication everywhere now; let's lean into the future and not cling onto obsolete and invasive technologies!

Thank you,  
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