

January 11, 2026
Vermont PUC

Dear members of the Vermont Public Utility Commission,

I am writing to you as a concerned resident of Rochester, VT regarding Case #25-2931-PET: Proposed Telecommunication Tower at 1030 Route 100S, Rochester, Vermont.

The Rochester Town Selectboard and Planning Commission officials have already stated in their letters to you that the proposed cell tower violates our Town Plan. It should also be noted that this proposed tower was not sought out by our town. Some of the violations of our Town Plan include the following areas:

- Habitat, Rare/Threatened/Endangered Species, Invasive Species - (Sections 4B.6, 13E, and 13F from the Rochester Town Plan address the issues of preserving habitats, protecting rare/threatened/endangered species, and preventing the spread of invasive species.)
- Wetlands - (Section 4B.2 from the Town Plan addresses the issue of wetlands.)
- Fluvial Erosion - (Sections 4B.2, 4C, 12, 13C, and Appendix B of the Town Plan, as well as the Rochester Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (Addendum 2), address concerns with fluvial erosion hazards.)
- Visibility: Historic Sites, Scenic Byway, Access Road - ((Section 4B.7), then the specific criteria for historic sites and scenic byways and historic sites in the Town Plan (sections 4B.3, 7F, 13H, and the Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan)).
- Coverage – site selecton and propagaton (Sections 4B.7 addresses site selection of telecommunications towers)
- Health Impacts - Over the course of the past year the Rochester PC has heard from several community members who either suffer ill effects from radiofrequency energy, or are concerned about such, and have provided many references supporting their claims and concerns. While the PC is clear that the PUC will not consider health impacts because federal regulations prohibit it (1996 Telecommunications Act), we wish to state that this is a growing community concern and should be reviewed in the future.
- Telecommunications Bylaws and Town Plan - (The Town Plan states on page 16: "4. Zoning Compliance: New telecommunications facilities shall be sited in accordance with municipal zoning regulations." A review of Rochester Zoning Bylaws, page 8 found: "b) Power generation, storage, and transmission facilities, which are regulated under 30

V.S.A. §248 by the Vermont Public Utility Commission. Such facilities, however, shall conform to policies and objectives specified for such development in the Town Plan." d) Networked telecommunications which are regulated under 30 V.S.A. § 248a by the Vermont Public Utility Commission. Such facilities should conform to the policies and objectives specified in the Town Plan.)

As submitted, this project does not comply with Rochester's Telecommunications Bylaws and the Town Plan regarding these issues. Other site options exist for increased coverage without a ridgetop tower causing watershed and land damage, and without violating our Town Plan.

We expect you, members of the PUC, to follow through on your requirement for substantial deference to town plans and deny this project.

Thank you,

Hannah Smith
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