

To: Public Utility Commission

January 12, 2026

From: Tara Murray and Russell Jaquith
Rochester residents
64 State Garage Road
Rochester, VT 05767
tarabmurray6@gmail.com
617-583-3412

Re: 25-2931-PET Verizon Wireless/248a-at 1030 Route 100 South-Rochester

Narrative in Support of Motion to Intervene

To Whom It May Concern:

We, Tara Murray and R. Thomas Jaquith are residents of Rochester and our property (home and rental) abuts 1030 Route 100 South, the property with the proposed cell tower. Please note that we were never notified of the proposed tower by the developer. We purchased our property from Greg Price on June 18, 2025.

For the following reasons, we write this narrative in support of our Motion to Intervene, as we are very strongly opposed to the proposed tower.

Our town of Rochester is our home and we consider the valley to be an amazing little gem in the heart of the Green Mountains. Tara's family all lives in Rochester after moving to the town from Massachusetts years ago. After we got married in 2022, we spent some time looking for the right place to call home. Russ is from New Hampshire and has travelled the world as a videographer and photographer. He was touched by the beauty, special character, and quaint nature of Rochester and agreed to purchase our home this past summer. It was the beautiful setting on State Garage Road on the river, a stones throw from Scenic Byway Route 100, as well as the sweeping mountain views, that stole our hearts. Since we were not notified by the developer, we heard from others about the proposed cell tower. The proposed tower would be visible from our property and would have great impact on us.

Financial impact:

We were financially able to purchase our property because there is a second house (96 State Garage Road) located on the same land. The tower would also be visible from, and very close to, our home as well as a second house on our property for which we rely on rental income to pay our loan. A tower would impact us financially due to lower home value and likely difficulty renting out the second home. It is hard to describe unless one were to be there in person, but the tower would not be a distant thumbnail, but rather a huge looming tower on the ridge above our home and the rental home. Many towns and cities have banned such close proximity to houses and schools, such as Bedford, NH, Shelburne, MA, etc, where towers would not be allowed to be built so close to homes and a school. Known studies show that homes near towers drop in value by 7-10%. If we cannot rent out our rental house or the rent is less, we will not have that money in order to pay our loan for our home. If we are forced to sell, the value would undoubtedly drop, leaving us financially harmed.

We also own Emerald valley, LLC located at 233, 235, and 237 South Main Street in Rochester. This property is 2.2 acres just south of the village and it has three buildings on it: The main house with 7, one bedroom apartments, the Carriage House with 3, one bedroom units and a hairdresser salon, and a third building which is leased to Gifford Medical Center for their Rochester Clinic. The tower tower would be clearly visible from the property. We rely on the income from this property. The value of the property as well as our ability to rent

it, will most definitely be affected by a proposed tower. We have invested a massive amount into this property and we work very hard to supply safe and beautiful housing to 12 tenants in Rochester. If a tower were built, we would suffer economic losses. The aesthetics aspect of the proposed tower would gravely impact our rental property because it will cause an undue adverse aesthetic impact.

Flooding/Fluvial erosion:

We don't want to lose our home to flooding and it is clear that Vertex has tried to mislead our residents about the tower plans and the grade and slope of the proposed development. A tower and the necessary development of the mountainside would greatly change the watershed, putting our town and all of us at risk. My family and I were in Rochester about 1.5 miles up from town when Hurricane Irene hit and like everyone else, we were stranded. We helped drudge out homes and salvage photos from mud in collapsed houses. An independent assessment shows that if the tower is put here, four times the water will shed onto the road and river and likely many homes could be destroyed. Our home was built in the 1800's and barely escaped Hurricane Irene, with water all around it! We literally sit beside the White River. We plan to start a family and we want to be able to stay living in our home without the threat of flooding and the dangers of a cell tower nearby.

The proposed tower would violate the Town Plan:

The Rochester Town Plan, Adopted April 27, 2020:

Scenic Byway:

It is a fact that Route 100 through Rochester is a Scenic Byway as designated by our state. Many in town worked extremely hard to get this designation done.

On page 15 of the Town Plan it states:

“For all telecommunications facilities, the following policies shall apply:”

3) Significant Areas: All new telecommunications facilities shall be sited and designed to avoid or, if no other reasonable alternative exists, to otherwise minimize or mitigate adverse impacts to the following:

- *State or federally designated scenic byways, and municipally designated scenic roads and viewsheds.*

Unlike what Verizon tried to lead us to believe, the proposed tower, if built, would be visible all through town on Scenic Byway Route 100 from Sky Hollow to almost State Garage Road coming from the North and then visible for maybe even further coming from the South, only obscured by turns in the road, buildings, or getting too close to the actual ridge. This is significant to us as residents as we expect the town plan and bylaws to be followed in the town where we have invested.

Wetland: A tower in the proposed location would interrupt a wetland, so this is absolutely in violation of the Town Plan which was specifically written to protect our town from proposals such as this.

The Town Plan specifically states on pages 15-16, *“Telecommunications Facilities:”*

“For all telecommunications facilities, the following policies shall apply:”

Prohibited Locations: Because of their distinctive natural, historic or scenic value, telecommunication facility development shall be excluded from the following areas:

- *Wetlands as indicated on Vermont State Wetlands Inventory maps or identified through site analysis.*

This is relevant to us as property owners due to the fact of flooding risk.

Endangered species issue:

Also under “*Prohibited Locations:*”

- *Rare, threatened or endangered species habitat or communities.*

Our Town Plan does not say, well, it's okay if we ask the state their opinion or ask the developer to not cut the trees certain times of the year to protect endangered bats. It says, “*Prohibited*” under the guidance for “*Telecommunications Towers.*”

Photos/visibility: The issue of the photographs is extremely important and significant to us as we will have to look at the tower every day. Vertex made a claim that of the 21 sites they took photos, the proposed tower would only be visible in four. This was a Vertex claim and one that is totally misleading. First of all, Russ has submitted photos taken of that balloon that prove otherwise. He is a professional photographer, videographer, cinematographer for over 30 years and it was not a hard task to take photos of the balloon last fall. However, we had no idea that we had to take photos from every place that the balloon was visible in order to prove that Vertex had misled us all. The balloon was visible in so many more places than four and also visible in between those places! Our photos don't nearly show most of the places. We would have to look at the proposed tower every day if it is built on the ridge above our home and Scenic Byway.

Telecommunications Bylaws:

Please see Rochester Zoning Bylaws:

- 4) *Zoning Compliance: New telecommunications facilities shall be sited in accordance with municipal zoning regulations.*

This is important to note as the Zoning Bylaws state on Page 8,

“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.*

So the Town Plan states that the the Zoning Bylaws be followed and the Zoning Bylaws state that the Town Plan shall be conformed to. Therefore, it seems fair to say that we must follow the Town Plan IN ORDER to comply with the Zoning Bylaws. This is significant to us as residents as we expect the town plan and bylaws to be followed in the town where we have invested.

Site selection:

(Excerpt from Town Plan)

7) *Site Selection: Site review should not be limited to the telecommunications facilities; other elements required of the facility need to be considered as well. These include access roads, site clearing, onsite power lines, substations, lighting, and off-site power lines.* Here the Town Plan is stating that the access road is part of the entire issue.

We know there are many other places that a tower could go and in fact, Verizon sent letters to many other town land owners. So we know that there are other sites that are possible and certainly there could be many more in the future, yet explored. This is not the last resort and does not have to be supported just because Verizon proposed it.

Grade:

Slope: There is even more new information to show that Verizon has misled our town about the grade. This information is relevant to us as there would be fluvial erosion and possible increased flooding due to the slope issues. Please read more of this important information sent by David Swedick. This grade/slope issue is yet another indicator that Vertex has misled us. This is significant to us as residents as we don't want damage to our homes.

Health:

Many towns and cities have banned such close proximity to houses and schools, such as Bedford, NH, Shelburne, MA, etc, where towers would not be allowed to be built so close to homes and a school. The National Association of Firefighters has not recommended such towers from fire houses because too many firefighters were developing neurological diseases.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was court-ordered in 2021 to review the safety of RFR/EMF based on extensive research demonstrating physical / biological harm. As of now, the FCC has ignored the federal court order. Since that ignored court ruling in 2021, we believe that we can comment on possible harm from a proposed tower and that the PUC should consider such information and argument.

We are in the midst of undergoing extremely expensive IVF in order to have a family. After investing nearly 100,000 into this and traveling to UVM as well as New York, we are extremely concerned about the increased miscarriage rates for woman living near cell towers. This is a proven statistic.

In summary, the petition as submitted violates the Town Plan in Sections 4B.2-Prohibited Areas (wetlands); 4B.2-Prohibited Areas (fluvial erosion hazard); Section 4B.3-Significant Areas (historic sites, Scenic Byways, public parks and trails, and private drinking water supplies). As residents of Rochester, we expect the Town Plan to be adhered to.

Therefore, we file our Motion to Intervene and we request a hearing on this matter, if the Town's recommendation is not dispositive. Our participation as a party will not unnecessarily delay this proceeding or otherwise unduly prejudice the interests of existing parties. There is no other way to protect our interests with except by participating in this proceeding.

Thank you for the consideration of this matter and we ask that the PUC accept our Motion to Intervene and deny the petition for the proposed tower.

Sincerely,

Tara Murray and R. Thomas Jaquith
64 State Garage Road
Rochester, Vermont 05767

Affidavit of R. Thomas Jaquith in Support of Motion to Intervene case No. 25-2931-PET

I am a professional camera operator, videographer, and film maker for 30+ years.

I took photos on November 14, 2024. I did precise GPS coordinates of the locations I photographed a small test balloon that day that was raised in town.

Vertex / Verizon misleads when they claim that only 4 of 21 locations is the tower visible from. In fact, it is clearly visible from the Historic downtown of Rochester Center. A very old town that has 25 structures that are historic value and on the State registry. These include the Park House and many others. The cell phone tower will be clearly visible from this Historic downtown area including the Park House, Pierce Hall and the downtown Main Street.

Source: http://accdservices.vermont.gov/ORCDocs/Rochester_StateRegister_NominationForm_00000002.pdf

They also make false claims that the only thing of historic concern is nearby Talcville which is over a half mile away. This is false, misleading and likely done purposefully to circumvent the 1/2 mile limitations of structures like towers being located. The proposed tower as GPS coordinated supplied by Vertex at: 43°51'35.4"N 72°47'53.4"W is less than 2000 feet from the center of Talcville.

Talcville is historic mining village, with the Williams Mine located East of the proposed tower and accessed off what is now Route 100 and runs just south parallel to Rogers Brook. This is shown on a 1915 Map of Rochester. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rochester_1915_1-62,500_-_PCL_Map_Collection_-_txu-pclmaps-topo-vt-rochester-1915.jpg (R.B. Marshall, Chief Geographer. Control by U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Surveyed in 1915).

This above map shows both the Peavine Railroad before it was destroyed in 1927 Flood, the mine Railroad to the Williams Mine departing from Peavine / Route 100 area eastbound, and many of these old historic buildings in the village of Talcville - most of which are still standing today.

It shows 12 houses / buildings on the east side of what is now Route 100, and our own home at #64 State Garage Road - which has been described as built in 1800, 1850, and officially in the Town of Rochester as "1900" which they record when it's at least 1900 or older construction and exact date unknown.

Our home at #64 State Garage Road is measure by GPS coordinates as 2392 feet from the proposed cell phone tower location, which is also less than a half mile of distance. The tower would also be visible from our historic 10.5 acres of land and home. This will impact our unspoiled mountain views which is why we purchased this property, decrease our property value by a national average of 9-10%. These buildings have survived the devastating 1927 flood and Hurricane Irene.

There were also several sheds that were submitted as Historic sites at 135 State Garage Road in the 1970s
Source: http://accdservices.vermont.gov/ORCDocs/Rochester_HistoricSurvey_SurveyForm_00000003.pdf

I have in my possession the following photographs that were made by myself on November 14, 2024 and information about location and view:

There are more photos from other locations taken with cell phones, but these are the professional DSLR photos. Listed below and photograph data is at 6 separate locations.

Google Drive was mentioned so I attached a folder with all the original full resolution pictures with original EXIF data in this folder (27 images total 240MB size). I also lowered the resolution to another folder which

could be emailed in 2 emails that totals 47 MB if desired.

LINK BELOW for photos described below:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YeDLx7tPrkAlZQUl-EkImNlZ9dJzJSq?usp=sharing>

All photos shot on professional Canon EOS 70D DSLR camera.
Lens Model: Canon EF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS

All photos taken Nov 14 2024 in Rochester, Vermont in the Time range 1:14pm to 1:39pm,
This can be verified on the embedded EXIF data on each photograph.

Image file name “IMG_2120.jpg” and the like are hereafter referred to as shortened name #2120

Images #2120 —through #2129 taken in front of the Pierce Hall Memorial building, 38 S Main Street (in their semi circular driveway) in the village of Rochester. This location clearly shows the cell phone tower balloon, above and to the right of the Park House. Time stamp all same time range of two minutes EXIF data verified / verifiable.

Image #2130: Photo taken over the roof of the St. Elizabeth Catholic Church which is at 169 S Main St. This location clearly shows the cell phone tower balloon, above and to the right of the Park House. Approximately location of photographer taking image is at the #130 South Main Street location.

Images: #2131- 2134 photo taken at #176 South Main Street, Rochester. 2132 shows the building at #176 location. All photos taken within the same minute of time. This location clearly shows the cell phone tower balloon. EXIF data verified / verifiable.

Images: #2136 - 2139 photos all taken from the Valley Hub / Multi center / Middle School driveway mouth on Route 100, 222 S Main Street. Cell phone tower test balloon is clearly visible. All taken in same minute of time. EXIF data verified / verifiable.

Images: #2140 - 2141:
Just past the parking lot for the baseball field about 50 feet south of end of dirt parking lot, approximately 58-240 Recreation Field Drive.
At approximately: GPS 43.874796, -72.810904
Cell phone tower test balloon is clearly visible. All taken in same minute of time. EXIF data verified / verifiable.

Images #2142 - 2144 and Images #2158 -2159 : Photos all taken at the baseball field, on the field on the northeast First base line. At GPS location approximate: 43.874755, -72.811338
Cell phone tower test balloon is clearly visible. All taken in same minute of time. EXIF data verified / verifiable.
Photos all taken in brackets of one minute each. Time is EXIF data verified / verifiable.

Images #2160 - 2163: Photos all taken at the tennis court at approximately 58-240 Recreation Field Drive.. Cell phone tower test balloon is clearly visible.
All taken in same minute of time. EXIF data verified / verifiable.
approximate GPS: 43.875488, -72.811397

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