

Stephen Gorman, Motion to Intervene, Case No. 21-3587, January 2, 2022

Project 21-3587-NMP not only adversely affects a beautiful, healthy forest containing significant natural and cultural resources, it adversely affects me, my family, and my friends and neighbors who live here.

No one in our neighborhood has ever been alerted to the fact that this project was under consideration. Not one of us has been consulted about it. No one associated with the project has shown us the respect of simply asking what we think about it. Without our knowledge or consent, project 21-3587-NMP will adversely affect our quality of life and will permanently destroy an irreplaceable natural environment that provides us, all of Norwich, and indeed the entire region with numerous irreplaceable ecological, social, and cultural benefits.

The development of this solar project directly affects my family and my property. I live in the neighborhood, and the affected area is a part of the fabric of everyday life here. Between my house and the project area is open space crisscrossed by a network of trails, making the project area a leisurely 10-minute walk through the unspoiled landscape that I take on a daily basis. My land abuts Jay Benson's land -- which is not posted and is open to all -- and Jay's land abuts the town forest land -- which is of course open to all. The town forest land abuts the project property -- which has historically been a part of the larger commons and has always been open to all. If this project is built, the common benefits that we who live here derive from this common land will be destroyed.

I use this land throughout every season of the year hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. A neighbor, Troy McBride, has spent years building an extensive trail network by hand on the town forest lands, on the project property, and on other private lands in the neighborhood. This extensive trail system is a big part of life for the entire community. Well thought-out and superbly designed, Troy's trails meander through this unbroken forest and take exquisite advantage of virtually every natural terrain feature.

Not only do I use the trails almost daily, but the trails are also used by the entire community for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, bird watching, school projects, citizen-science, stress-relief, meditation, and for healthy exercise generally as they are within walking distance of the most densely populated portions of Norwich. The trails access the entire forest and are an important connector linking the various wooded expanses within this forested landscape.

The path of the trail through the project site -- under the mature mixed hardwood forest canopy that 21-3587-NMP is scheduled to replace -- wanders through distinct natural communities and ecologically important wetlands, including streams and notably, vernal pools, which are vital breeding spaces for amphibians. The trail parallels the headwaters and the drainage system that 21-3587-NMP straddles.

Heading downstream, the trail reveals the steep, sloping nature of the project site, where there may well be wet seeps that create microenvironments critical for certain species of plants and

amphibians. Elsewhere on the site the trail wanders through other areas where the ANR Atlas indicates there are rare, threatened, or endangered plant species.

My interests are affected if development of the project on this site damages the wetlands, the headwater streams, the wildlife, and the natural environment. I am affected by the fact that in New England we lose 65 acres of carbon-absorbing forest per day to developments such as this. I am affected by the fact that, if these trends continue, 1.2 million acres of forestland will be irretrievably lost in the next 50 years.

My family and I will be deeply affected if loss of forestland permanently damages the cherished character of the Vermont landscape that we invest in and value so dearly. We will be deeply affected because developments like 21-3587-NMP will diminish this land's beauty, undermine its capacity to yield clean air and clean water, to mitigate flooding -- which is expected to increase dramatically in Vermont due to climate change -- to produce food and valuable wood products, to absorb carbon, to support wildlife, and to provide other critical services needed and valued by all Vermonters, including us.

Finally, as a ratepayer of Green Mountain Power, I have a strong interest in this project's negative impacts upon my electricity rates, which will go up due to cost shifting. Besides negatively affecting my quality of life, this project will provide me with negative economic effects. For those of us who live here, this project provides no benefits whatsoever.

I request to intervene on the following:

30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(4) (economic benefit)

30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(1) (orderly development)

30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5) (aesthetics, historic sites, air & water purity, the natural environment, the use of natural resources, and public health and safety)

30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5); 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1) (noise, air & water purity and greenhouse gas impacts)

10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(A) (headwaters)

10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(E) (streams)

10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(1)(G) (wetlands)

10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8) (aesthetics, historic sites, and rare and irreplaceable natural areas)

10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8)(A) (necessary wildlife habitat and endangered species)