



**State of Vermont
Public Utility Commission
PRESS RELEASE**

Public Utility Commission Denies Cell Tower in Rare Forest Block

Montpelier, VT, September 21, 2017 – Today the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“PUC”) denied the application filed by Verizon Wireless to install and operate a telecommunications facility on an approximately 104-acre parcel of unique land located off Ruby Raymond Road in Waterbury, Vermont.

Based on evidence provided by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (“ANR”), the PUC concluded that construction of the project would “destroy or significantly imperil necessary wildlife habitat” in the North Hill forest block, a large area of undeveloped forest with diverse natural communities, necessary bear habitat, and wildlife corridors. In addition, the PUC found that approval of the proposed project would have been contrary to the recommendation of the Town of Waterbury to deny the project because it was not consistent with its Town Plan.

Construction of the project would have required significant earth disturbance, tree clearing, and blasting of rock ledge.

In its Order, the PUC wrote that the “evidence presented by ANR demonstrates that the North Hill forest block constitutes a rare and irreplaceable natural area which will be unduly, adversely impacted by the construction of the project in the core of the block. . . . Further, a reasonable alternative location exists that would allow for construction of the project.”

The PUC stressed that the Order should not be read as a blanket prohibition of telecommunications facilities in all forest blocks in Vermont. The PUC wrote, “The evidence presented in this regard applies to this forest block only. ANR has not asked, nor has the Hearing Officer recommended, that development of telecommunications facilities be prohibited in all forest blocks in the state.” Further, the PUC emphasized that it “will continue to judge each petition based on the evidence presented in that particular case.”

The objective of the project was to improve existing cellular coverage in Waterbury and along portions of Vermont Route 100 and Interstate 89.

The text of the PUC’s decision in Docket No. 8601 is available via the PUC’s electronic filing and case management system, ePUC, at the following website: epuc.vermont.gov.

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