

August 31, 2015

Re: Denison/Pratt quarry proposal for Halifax, Vermont

Many concerns have been raised at the previous hearings and I want to take this opportunity to add that the proposed quarry project threatens the integrity of Halifax's valued forest resources. Recently on the state level, a Forest Integrity Bill was enacted. (There was a ceremonial signing of Act 61 by Governor Shumlin 2 months ago. See below.) "The law should result in new measures to be considered in the 2016 legislative year to stem the fragmentation of Vermont's forests."<sup>1</sup> According to VNRC's Forest and Wildlife Program director, Jamey Fidel, "Our forests are getting subdivided into smaller parcels and converted to non-forest cover. Once that happens the benefits that forests provide, such as clean water, habitat for wildlife, access for recreation, and diverse forest products are lost."<sup>2</sup>

In Windham County, the Windham Regional Commission is working with the towns of Halifax and Guilford on the Forest Stewardship Project because these towns have the highest concentration of forested land in the state. The goal of this project is to "keep forests as forests" and Halifax has the highest amount of acreage in the Windham Region classified as "high forest stewardship potential"<sup>3</sup> by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation. The report identifies threats to forested areas and develops strategies to protect forested areas from fragmentation.

Not only is the proposed quarry project not a listed use for the Conservation District in the Halifax Town Plan, it is not compatible with current forest management goals on the state level. An industrial project like the proposed schist quarry is not in alignment with current local and state goals.

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Additional Information:

Act 61, Sec. 14a, p. 11-12 – Recommendation for Implementation of Vermont Forest Fragmentation Report (on or before January 15, 2016).

See [fpr.vermont.gov](http://fpr.vermont.gov) and Forests & Forestry for the "Forest Fragmentation Report" by ANR – 4/2015

See [windhamregional.org/forestry](http://windhamregional.org/forestry) for "The Forest Stewardship Report"

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<sup>1</sup> Vermont Natural Resources Council, July E-News 7/24/2015

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> The Forest Stewardship Project Report, [www.windhamregional.org/forestry](http://www.windhamregional.org/forestry)