

November 25, 2025

Re: *Docket #543 – Proposed Cell Tower, Washington, CT*

Dear Mr Brinton,

As members of the Washington Conservation Commission, we strongly recommend the proposed cell tower be relocated to an alternative and unforested location in town, rather than clearing an intact acre of forest at the current site.

Clearing one acre of forest would remove ~350 trees, the Litchfield County average for forest density. These trees contain roughly 44 tons of carbon, and their loss represents the carbon dioxide emissions equivalent of 34 gasoline-powered cars driven for one year, based on the U.S. EPA's greenhouse gas calculator. In an age of climate change, we should be making every effort to keep our forests standing to absorb additional carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

Washington is already experiencing ongoing forest decline. Residential development has expanded by ~9% since 2000, while forestland has decreased by nearly 2% (~320 acres) over the same period. Additional clearing for infrastructure is counter to the town's conservation priorities outlined in the 2025 NRIR report "to stem the slow erosion of forest cover that has occurred.."

The proposed site is also located on the edge of the *Shepaug Forest Block Important Bird Area*, one of the region's most significant interior-forest habitats. Increasing fragmentation and disturbance here runs counter to the designation and goals of this IBA.

Given that open, non-forested parcels are available elsewhere in town, we strongly recommend selecting one of those sites.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to environmentally responsible siting decisions.

Sincerely,

Washington Conservation Commission