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Effingham Planning Board
Attention: Theresa Swanick, Chair
Town of Effingham
68 School Street,
Effingham, NH 03882

Dear Ms. Swanick and Members of the Board:

As you are likely aware, Society for the Protection of NH Forests High Watch Preserve is located in Effingham. We try to stay informed about important environmental matters happening in the region.

We have taken note of the proposal currently before the Planning Board by Meena LLC to operate a gas station in Effingham's groundwater protection district. We are encouraged that the Planning Board has determined that this is a proposed Development of Regional Impact "due to the proximity of the proposed operation to groundwater in the aquifer".

Among the Forest Society's priority goals when we undertake a conservation project is the protection of water supply lands and important aquatic resources. Given the problems New Hampshire has experienced in the last fifteen years from contaminants like MBTE and PFAS, we believe that goal should be paramount for organizations, municipalities and state agencies. Fortunately, steps like the establishment of the New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund reflect a commitment to carry out that goal.

As the Board reviews the site plan application, we would urge the Planning Board to closely study the potential negative effects this project poses to the water resources in this region. Furthermore, we would ask the Board to consider how interconnected those resources are to other important natural resources. For example, Ossipee Lake connects to the Ossipee River which flows past the Forest Society's Dr. Melvin A. Harmon Preserve in Freedom.

Development can be compatible with the protection of critical water resources if the development project is sited in the appropriate location. As the Board considers this project, we urge you to consider carefully whether the proposed site is an appropriate spot or if viable alternatives exist within town that will not have similar impacts to the Ossipee Aquifer and other important water resources.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Matt Leahy, Public Policy Director
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests