

June 12, 2023

Mr. George Bull, Chairman
Effingham Planning Board
Town of Effingham
68 School Street
Effingham, NH 03882

Dear Chairman Bull:

This letter is regarding the proposal by Meena LLC to operate a gas station in Effingham's groundwater protection district. We are pleased 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."

The Nature Conservancy has been committed to the protection of the Ossipee Aquifer for over 30 years. Our Ossipee Pine Barrens Preserve to the north of Ossipee Lake helps to protect areas of clean recharge for the aquifer. We recognize that this is a critical drinking water resource for the region and is the State's largest sand and gravel aquifer. As you know, sand and gravel aquifers are highly susceptible to contamination because they lack the protection of a bedrock "cap."

Given the problems New Hampshire has experienced in the last fifteen years from contaminants like MBTEs and PFAS, and the susceptibility of the Ossipee Aquifer to contamination, we urge the Planning Board to closely study and carefully evaluate the potential negative impacts this project poses to vital water resources in the region.

It is critical to permit and site development in a manner that supports the protection of this important resource. The residents of Effingham and the surrounding towns that rely on the Ossipee aquifer for their drinking water should be carefully considered as you evaluate this proposal and identify alternatives that may pose fewer risks.

Thank you for considering these comments and for your stewardship of this important resource.

Sincerely,



Rachel Rouillard, State Director
The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire