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For the scope of the environmental impact study, close attention needs to be paid to the extent to which communities around Newport will also be affected, not just Newport itself. It may also be worth taking another look at what is now considered "acceptable levels" of pollution. There seems to be no question whether this smelter will pollute, the only question is how much. And in this current state of affairs, I truly fear that the state and federal governments' idea of acceptable levels is far higher than what residents are wanting to tolerate.

There seems to be a hard push to "create jobs" in the form of a silicon smelter in Newport, and Rock Creek mine in Montana, not to mention the desire to increase railroad traffic through Sandpoint, ID. Many, if not most, people have moved to north Idaho to enjoy the beautiful landscape and the outdoor opportunities it offers, and both of these projects will directly and negatively affect our environment. We're also in the difficult position of being a narrow strip of state between two others, not able to have proper say over how our land is affected. The only argument that seems valid in support of these projects is job creation. It's true, finding a job may not be easy, but have we not progressed as a society since the early 1900's when people had to give up their health and wellbeing in order to find work? Not to mention the fact that it is highly unlikely that HiTest will mostly hire locally. So locals stand to reap all of the negatives and little to none of the positives, if there are any.

As a final example, along Lake Pend Oreille there is a large blob called "Black Rock" which is the size of a house. It's made up of smelted garbage left over from a previous smelter many decades ago. It still sits there, contaminating the water and covered with "Warning: Lead contaminants" signs all around it. It serves as a warning to not further degrade what we have. We don't need this smelter, at least not anywhere near here. Let's learn from our past mistakes and find other ways to create jobs.