

Melissa Riordan

Melissa Riordan

Sep 30, 2018, 11:36 PM (9 hours ago)

Date: September 30, 2018

Dear Mr. Manus, Ms. Scoog, Mr. Kiss, and Mr. Snow, and the Department of Ecology

As a regular visitor and friend of residents within Pend Oreille County, I do not support the construction and operation of a silicon smelter in Newport and ask that you stop this project. My concerns are as follows:

Coal ash - It is estimated that the smelter operation would burn 150,000 tons of coal per year. In addition, to the air pollution produced during the incineration of coal, approximate 1 ton of coal ash is produced for every 4 tons of coal burned. Coal ash is a very fine particle material that looks a lot like the wood ash produced in a woodstove. Coal ash is a concern, because according to the EPA "Coal ash contains contaminants like mercury, cadmium, and arsenic, and without proper management can pollute waterways, groundwater, and drinking water" The proper management means ash must be disposed of in a lined land fill and covered at all times, as contaminated ash is easily transported by wind and water if not properly managed. However, with this warning stated on EPA's webpage as of yesterday, this last summer the Trump administration loosened the requirements for disposing of coal ash left after burning. The new rules allow states to stop monitoring groundwater near coal ash disposal sites in certain situations, and has loosen requirements on coal burning facilities to close leaking, unlined coal ash disposal areas.

In addition, to the messy expense of maintaining a lined and covered long term landfill facility for coal ash disposal, the identification of where the landfill would be located is critical to ensure that it is above the water table and away from flood waters. Just this last month during hurricane Florence in North Carolina there were headlines of large quantities of coal ash being released into floodwaters. If you Google coal ash, coal ash contaminated sites in Tennessee and Kentucky, where the blue gem coal is coming from, is well documented as a long-term human health problem. So, has PacWest presented to the local government a plan for coal ash disposal? This is just one of several concerns that as local official I would have uncertainty about ensuring the safety of clean water and air in regards to this smelter, even if they promised to maintain a leak proof, flood proof landfill infinitely.

Water - PacWest is not forthcoming with the amount of water use, what it would be used for, and where it would go after use. On Department of Ecology project website, it is stated "PacWest doesn't expect wastewater would be discharged to surface waters or onto the ground" So where would wastewater be discharged? and what would be different about the water before it went to the facility? The quantity, use, and water disposal should be identified to determine what water quality impacts are expected from this facility before any water use permits, or local approvals are granted.

Also, on the Department of ecology project website, it is implied that the local government would issue a water use permit. Is this true and has there been a public involvement process before the issuance of this permit?

Air pollution – The Department of ecology project website says "Annual emissions of at least one

criteria pollutant is expected to exceed the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) major source thresholds." This is concerning given that the community already experiences air quality issues that affect public health, such as wood burning smoke during the coldest times of the year and summer wildfires. According to Washington Department of Health, due to climate change with a increase in summer temperatures and decreasing summer precipitation in the area burned by fire regionally is projected to double by 2040 and triple by 2080. Based on existing, other reasonably foreseeable cumulative future increases in air pollution, along the large quantities of air pollutants that would be emitted by the smelter, air quality would very likely become a serious health risk in Pend Oreille County.

This smelter is a large industrial operation that would cause substantial air and water pollution in a place that is cherished for its natural beauty, forsaking many of precious qualities that make this part of the world special. Please reject the construction of a silicon smelter in Pend Oreille County.

Sincerely,

Melissa Riordan, Riordan1261@gmail.com

Fairbanks, AK 99712