

10/25/18

After reviewing the letters concerning the proposed smelter in Newport, it is apparent that the overwhelming majority opposed it. It will have widespread detrimental effects on the environment of Eastern Washington and parts of Idaho and Montana. In addition it is likely to negatively impact the health of many of the citizens and wildlife in these regions, adversely affect property values and schools and negatively impact the aquifer and surrounding bodies of water.

The production of acid rain may adversely impact the unique environment in the area, including Priest Lake, Lake Pend Oreille and the Selkirk mountains. Please provide me, and anyone else who is concerned about the smelter, with scientific, well controlled studies that document that the pollutants that would be generated by the smelter would not adversely impact the environment including the sensitive plants and animals in the area including specifically huckleberries and mushrooms that are unique to the region. If no studies have been conducted, it would be irresponsible from an ecological, health, social, moral and ethical perspective for the governing bodies of Washington to allow a smelter to be built in Newport and not know in advance what the short and long term repercussions would be. It would be irresponsible to subject this region to these potentially harmful effects until it is well studied and documented beforehand.

Huckleberries are a major food source for many animals including bears and birds. In addition, many residents and visitors to the region enjoy picking and consuming huckleberries and mushrooms. However, huckleberry plants are very fastidious. They cannot be grown or transplanted outside of their natural environment and no one has ever been able to grow them commercially, such as in a vineyard or elsewhere. If they are damaged or fail to produce an adequate supply of berries, bears and other wildlife will have to look for other food sources or may starve. They may come into more populated areas in search of food, creating more interactions between them and humans which will have negative consequences for both.

The smelter will have serious environmental and potential health consequences for the entire region. These ill effects will create a negative, downhill spiral which will have adverse consequences and repercussions to the area for many future generations.

The proposal to build a smelter in Newport should be aborted. It is a very bad idea and the negative impact that it will have will far outweigh the few jobs that may be created. Newport and the surrounding area can attract other, more environmentally friendly businesses.

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