

Gonzaga University Environmental Studies Class

Our Environmental Studies class at Gonzaga University would like to provide comments regarding the proposed PacWest Silicon Smelter during the scoping period. We have many concerns regarding the impact that this smelter will have on Newport and the surrounding areas, especially as the world faces the massive effects of climate change.

The first concern we want to address is what the silicon produced by the smelter will be used for. We want to see a concrete plan for what companies or organizations the silicon will be sold to. If it will be used for solar panels, we would like to know exactly what percentage of the silicon produced will be going towards the production of these solar panels. We would like to see a thorough analysis of the market for silicon in the United States and worldwide in order to evaluate the need for this smelter. If the silicon is not being used for solar panels, what exactly is it being used for and how high is the demand for these products.

The second concern we would like to address is the effect that the smelter will have on the wildlife surrounding Newport, specifically the five endangered species in the area. Although these species haven't been recorded in the specific location of the smelter, we think that the Department of Ecology should conduct a thorough observation of the animals and plants within the site and within a mile surrounding the site. Not only do we think that the Department of Ecology should consider the direct effects of the smelter including habitat destruction, but also the indirect effects of pollution and waste products that could be harmful to these species. We think that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife should be consulted in this process. The department should also look into how close the nearest wetland is to the proposed site and what the impacts on it would be. We learned that a Townsend big-eared bat communal roost site was documented close to the property and we would like to know how this community will be affected.

We hope that you take our comments into consideration when evaluating the scope of this smelter.