

Mary Toutonghi

I and my family have owned a cabin in Priest Lake, Idaho since the early '50s and have long treasured the rural atmosphere, clear water and pure air.

The last number of years due to the forest fires that have raged in the area, the air has become painfully smoky during many of the summer months.

I have become extremely concerned about the proposed silicon smelter in NE Washington - so close to the town of Newport - particularly because of the added pollution to the air and water it would cause. The estimated pollutants would be significantly higher than what is normally allowed - polluting the entire town and region according to studies cited in PEND OREILLE HEALTH, "Criteria Pollutant Emissions" 10/24/17. Numerous other studies corroborate these findings.

There is verifiable evidence of the occupational and non-occupational dangers and health hazards associated with Silicon Smelting/metals processing. My husband suffered from COPD and my daughter suffered from asthma. Adding the estimated pollutants to the smoke from forest fires would render the air hazardous for many many citizens in the area.

The surrounding area does not have adequate infrastructure - law enforcement, particularly medical facilities, first responders, and water/sewer systems to deal with the complexities of the addition of a silicon smelter. This also concerns me. It presents a situation in which the community is simply not prepared for certain serious problems.

One example is the inability of the county to protect ground and surface waters by ensuring there is enough water available to accommodate growth before more development is authorized. See Whatcom County vs Hirst Washington Supreme Court decision.

I appreciate your attention to the many serious concerns held by citizens who surely will be affected by the smelter.