

# Jennifer Sudick

September 20, 2018

TO: Washington State Department of Ecology

RE: PacWest Silicon Smelter EIS

I have read numerous articles about the proposed PacWest Silicon Smelter in Eastern Washington and am extremely disheartened that this is being considered so close to residential neighborhoods, schools, tribal lands, and our pristine natural resources.

In these articles, there are common threads expressed, with the benefits all weighing heavily to the company running the smelter. This includes proximity to natural resources like timber, railways, cheap energy and cheap labor. Meanwhile, there are very few benefits to the Eastern Washington and North Idaho region. I see an extremely limited number of jobs being produced, and an ecological and health disaster that will scar our area for decades to come, reduce economic growth overall as higher-income families leave, and damage our housing market beyond repair.

I was born in Newport, raised in rural Priest River (by Southern California transplants who moved away from pollution there in 1980), and now own a home in Sandpoint, where I graduated from high school. I obtained my Master's Degree from Northwestern University in Chicago, and subsequently worked as a business reporter in Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles, Houston and Honolulu. I am a private pilot, a scuba diver, a marathon runner, and an ardent community supporter. I also work in public relations, marketing and journalism and can certainly spot a PR spin machine from a mile away (in this case, about 30 miles but still far too close).

I am now 35. Five years ago, I purchased a home in Sandpoint during the heart of the economic recession that swept the country. I chose to move back to this rural region because of the lifestyle it provided – namely, the clean air and natural resources I had grown accustomed to in my youth that were sorely lacking in the many other places I had lived. It is now where I raise my two young boys, and where I work full time.

We have seen a transformation in these few short years. Younger, 30-something families with education are moving back to the region or into town from elsewhere. They are purchasing and fixing up homes. They love the sense of community, the environment, and the lifestyle. There is a vibrancy and health to the area that is unprecedented in my lifetime.

The "benefit" crafted by the smelter public relations team and leadership is that we will have additional jobs in Newport. Many of the educated younger families I know are coming back to the region for the lifestyle, and they would surely, like me, move away were a smelter to move into our backyard. One of our biggest selling points to attracting younger Millennial and Gen X families is our environment; the same with our thriving year-round visitor industry. There will be irreplaceable economic and environmental damage due to the irresponsible potential placement of this smelter – we simply have no tolerance for this disgusting disregard for human health, environment and property.

In short, it would be a net loss and an economic disaster as families with higher incomes move out of the region and home prices plummet due to this poor decision to provide a handful of lower-income jobs. We will leave, for other like-minded areas in Oregon or Montana – including people who were born and raised here – chased away by a company that has no business coming

into the U.S.

We are disgusted and alarmed by the terrible placement of this smelter directly near many tens of thousands of people and pristine environmental areas, but also hundreds of thousands of residents in the Spokane metro area. I have been fortunate enough to travel throughout the U.S. and many other countries, and pristine places like Eastern Washington and North Idaho are few and far between. This is why – we are sold a bill of goods by snake oil salespeople and left holding the bag with the mess.

The air settles in our valleys and lakes, we can see that through the air patterns with smoke from California, Oregon and Washington. The pollutants from the smelter would settle on our homes, in our wells and gardens, and in our lungs, and those of our children. I'm going to wager a guess that the leadership of this company won't be purchasing residential property for their families near the smelter. Who would? The lawmakers trying to ram this down our throats so they can pat themselves on the back for "economic benefit" to a rural region? Doubtful they are lining up, either. Canada, and even Washington State, have many rural areas from which this smelter could operate, far from our regional urban centers. But, due to our location in Eastern Washington and North Idaho, we are at a disadvantage – we are far from the lobbyists and lawmakers in Olympia and Boise who see us as "rural" folks who don't mind living right up against an ecological disaster. We are, in fact, not rural here, and we enjoy a quality of life and health that we can't find in bigger cities, even if that means we make less money. We are, family by family, bringing a health and vibrancy to this area that will be damaged if this smelter is to be located here. Far from an economic benefit, you will see an economic collapse.

But, at the convenience of this company, they want to ram it right into our back yards so they can be closer to our resources, cheap energy, cheap labor, and rail transportation. With all my heart, I encourage you to look carefully at the environmental, health and economic hazards of locating this smelter at its proposed location.

It's not good business, it's not good for our communities, and it's certainly not going to benefit anyone but a select few, while causing damage to hundreds of thousands of others. My vote, as a Newport-born, Priest River-raised now-resident of Sandpoint, is NO. Ultimately, if the smelter is built, I will choose not to sacrifice my health or the health of my family, but I will leave – taking my tax dollars, my education and my community support elsewhere. Others will do the same. We just don't have any tolerance for this type of B.S.

Jennifer Sudick  
Sandpoint, Idaho