Carol Mack

Scoping comments on PacWest Newport Smelter proposal

1. Air pollution effects, especially in consideration of local wildfire smoke and air inversion conditions:

As other commenters have noted, wildfire smoke pollution has become a common summer and fall problem in the area causing many medical issues, some tourism decline, and occasional cancellation of outdoor events. How will smelter emissions interact with this smoke to increase impacts on human and environmental health, and on the outdoor recreation and tourism economy? How many additional days per year will we be advised to remain inside to reduce ill effects?

Air inversions, especially during the winter months, often create a band of fog that clings to the Pend Oreille River valley through many mornings, and occasionally for the entire day. How will the "smog" produced from the addition of smelter emissions affect health and environment?

2. Water quantity and quality issues:

In view of frequent years when the Little Spokane River already does not meet minimum flow requirements, how will an additional industrial withdrawal affect the water quality and quantity, water use by current watershed residents, and possible future development in the watershed?

3. Appropriate environmental analysis:

Because of the location of this proposed smelter, emissions will impact at least two states, two national forests (including wilderness areas and Research Natural Areas), and state forests, municipalities and private forest land on both sides of the state line. What is the appropriate level of analysis?

4. Additional future impacts through expanded production or process changes:

Impacts from adding additional furnaces to the smelter facility in the future need to be addressed in this initial analysis. Once facilities are established in a community it often becomes more difficult to impartially analyze impacts because of local investment, tax revenues received, and development of political support. What environmental processes will be in place to predict impacts if the plant is expanded in the future, or if a different process (such as changing coal and sand sources, types, or amounts, or including local charcoal production) is instituted?

Thank you,
Carol Mack