

Carol Holmes

As a resident of Bonner County, I am deeply concerned about the impacts of the proposed silicon smelter on the health, natural environment, economy and way of life for our community. It is imperative that a full Environmental Impact Statement be completed. It is crucial that the government agencies involved do their own research and not take PacWest's word for it. Some of the questions that must be addressed are:

1) What would be the impacts to our air?

What would be the constituents of the out-put from the smelter stack, their quantity and proportions?

Are any of the constituents known to cause cancer or other health problems?

How would they travel in the air currents across our county in different seasons? The wind patterns need to be studied for at least one year, preferably three, since no one year is representative.

What would be the effects on our health from both the particulate and the chemical composition?

How would they affect vulnerable populations such as those with asthma or COPD?

How effective are the proposed mitigations or stack scrubbing?

What would be the impacts of the air contaminants on acid rain? On our forest's health? On our wildlife? On endangered or vulnerable species, like White Bark Pine, Mountain Goats, amphibians, birds, bees?

What would be the secondary impacts on our tourism and forest products industries? The resultant effect on the local economy?

How would the air quality affect our own enjoyment of the natural world, the clarity of its beauty and the purity of its water?

2) What would be the impact on the rail system and roads?

What would be the magnitude of the delivery and dispatching of raw materials, energy resources like coal, final products, and refuse and residues?

How much would infrastructure be degraded and maintenance costs increased?

Would the possibility of derailments increase? Is the region prepared to respond to derailments -- especially on or near water? Who pays?

What would be the impact on traffic and the timely delivery of emergency services?

3) What would be the impacts to our water?

From the air pollution?

From the use of water in manufacturing and any effluent?

What would be in the effluent? How would it affect our rivers, streams and ground water? The health of the soil?

Would water resources for the area be strained?

Would water prices increase?

4) What would be the energy requirements and how would they be met?

What are the environmental impacts from the extraction of those energy resources?

How do those affect the cost benefit analysis mentioned below?

5) What would be the impacts on soil health, for gardening and agriculture?

6) What would be the local impacts of noise from the smelter, from the trucks and trains?

7) What would be the impacts on the night sky in the surrounding area?

Will lighting from the plant affect peoples' ability to see stars? For many of us, that is a quality of life issue. It is one of the joys of living in this area.

8) What kinds of jobs would be created?

How dangerous or hazardous are those jobs?

How many would be filled by local residents?

How well would they pay?

Would there be benefits?

9) If PacWest declared bankruptcy or sold the company, who would pay for environmental clean-up?

10) What commitment has PacWest made for the silicon to be used for solar panels?

Is there truly a benefit to the environment when the process seems to use so many resources of materials, water and energy to create something that is supposed to help the environment?

What is the cost benefit balance?

11) What would be the overall effect on real estate values both adjacent to the smelter and downwind or downstream?

Thank you for considering these urgent questions.

Carol Holmes