

Xuequn Pan

Dear Mr. Pfeiffer,

My name is Thubten Damcho (Xuequn Pan) and I have been a resident of Newport, Washington since 2013. I am a nun living at Sravasti Abbey and was originally born and raised in Singapore.

1. I would like to suggest that as part of the EIS, the staff of the Department of Ecology conduct a study trip in person to sites where smelters have been constructed, preferably in places similar to Newport, and provide written and photographic documentation to the public about what you learn.

I would like to see case studies of at least two possibilities:

a) a best-case scenario of a smelter that has best practices in place with limited impact on the surrounding environment. For instance, one that has equipment that ensures compliance with emissions limits; that has emergency procedures in place for technical failures, etc.

b) a worst-case scenario of a smelter project that has failed e.g. closure after a few years, technical breakdown, and the subsequent cost to the government and the community.

I think such a study will not only help the DOE and the public get a clearer picture of the range of environmental impacts of the proposed smelter, but also help the DOE in setting regulatory requirements and benchmarks, and taking into full account the potential benefits and risks of this project.

2. I would also like to request that you run projections of smelter emission impact on air quality based on a number of different scenarios:

- a) smelter in steady state
- b) smelter when air is already hazardous due to wildfires
- c) if bluegem coal is used as a raw material
- d) if regular coal is used as a raw material
- e) if the company switches to producing aluminium.

I believe it would be helpful to model possible scenarios with the smelter again to assess potential risks and delineate what the DOE would consider acceptable benchmarks.

3. I believe many members of public have already called for your study to cover the impact of the smelter on air, water, and soil quality and surrounding infrastructure in the immediate term and over a period of 30 to 50 years. In addition, I hope it will also study the projected environmental impact of the influx of new workers, housing construction, etc. Will there be secondary industries arising related to the smelter (e.g. Manufacturing plants using silicon to make products?) If so, what will their further environmental impact be? In my country of origin, Singapore, government policies to increase labor migration for economic reasons did not take into account the environmental costs of a sharp increase in population, which led to social disharmony and caused the ruling party to also fall into political disfavor. It would be wise to consider the impact of human influx into the small town of Newport and its surrounding areas from environmental and cultural perspectives to prevent social problems downstream.

4. I was glad to see in your presentation slides that one of the suggested areas of study is "aesthetics," which I think is deeply connected with mental and spiritual well-being of a

community. This is something difficult to quantify but it is important to find a way to capture the value of the beauty of the natural environment on human well-being, and the cost that we incur when the skyline is disturbed by smokestacks, the night sky is lit by the smelter and new housing, the blue skies enveloped in haze, and the area around the smelter becomes industrialized and unable to support natural growth in the long-term.

5. I wish too there were a way for your report to express the impact of the smelter on community values and trust in the government in the immediate and longer term. If the government supports a large, foreign corporation to build a smelter regardless of the cost to the environment and the community, it sends a signal to the community that the state values economic growth over environmental conservation and the community's wishes. The social and emotional impact of this cannot be understated. The already tenuous faith of the people in the government will continue to decline, and children will grow up with the view that money is more important than the environment, which will in turn lead to further environmental degradation. That is the kind of world that I grew up in, in a country where there is no natural environment to speak of. That the people of Newport and this region value the natural environment dearly and are willing to speak up and dedicate their lives to its preservation is deeply precious, and also important for the DOE. If society did not value the natural environment, the DOE would cease to exist.

In attending the Newport High School public consultation I was moved to hear the voices of people speaking up for the environment and how it reflects their values, beliefs, way of life. The Smelter project strikes at the heart of our basic human needs for safety, community, belonging, and legacy. How will the EIS reflect these heartfelt concerns? How might the DOE and other stakeholders work together to fulfill these common needs, even if we might disagree on the actual strategies?

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to you and your staff for taking on this difficult task of public consultation, which is essential to this project and must continue. If you decide to hold smaller focus group discussions with citizens as the process proceeds, I would be happy to participate and share my views.

Yours sincerely,
Thubten Damcho.