

Charity Luthy

On August 21st, 2019, my family will have been property owners and residents of Bonner County for EIGHTY YEARS. In 1939, my father's family came from Johnstown, Colorado and started a dairy farm on half a country section in Bonner County, and I still live on that family farm. I was born in Sandpoint and raised in Priest River, and I - and my family - have never lived any place else. I'm told by certain unnamed individuals in the online community that those of us who've never lived anywhere else have more of a say - for some silly reason - than people who have moved here from somewhere else. I think that's ridiculous, but I am here to tell you that, as someone who has a LOT of history in this community, this smelter is a bad idea.

For me, I am concerned about the only home I have ever known. The prevailing winds will almost dead-center the smelter's pollution onto our property, no matter how much or little it's going to supposedly put out. Even a single molecule is too great of cost.

And I understand the need for jobs, but no job is worth the pristine nature we have here. I have chosen to stay here despite that my life and career would be easier elsewhere. Why? Because there is no amount of money that can equal the value of the healthy air and water we have here. PERIOD. Getting my Bachelor's and Master's degrees required driving up to 6 days per week to Spokane and Coeur d'Alene. My first teaching job was in Pullman, at WSU, and I drove there for my work every day, from Priest River to Pullman. Today, I drive to Colville to teach at the Rural Education Center at SCC. Why? Because I live here. I don't want to live anywhere else. I could whine that I have to travel for work but, you know what? You make sacrifices for what is important to you, and the environment we have here is not replaceable by any amount of money or any amount of jobs. Once it's done, you cannot get it back, not for any amount of money. Some have said that we should support the smelter because it would keep our young people here instead of going elsewhere for jobs. I hate to tell you, but they'll leave anyway if this smelter is built. Within a few years, everything worth staying here for will be gone or on its way out. I don't know about you, but I don't want to see that happen.

With my education, skills, and experience, I could definitely get a better paying job somewhere else, one that would probably provide health and retirement benefits that I don't get now. But THIS IS MY HOME. This is OUR HOME. And I don't want to live anywhere else, and I know why people come here from other places around the country: because there is no price you can put on the clean air, water, and wildlife we have here. The way of life we have here is built on protecting our natural resources, not sullyng them for future generations so a few people can make some money. It is positively ludicrous that we as a community have to fight our elected officials and representatives to actually represent

US and OUR WILL here to preserve the pristine nature we have here. Being an Idaho resident, only one state representative, Heather Scott, has stepped up to protect Idaho's and Bonner County's interests and environment. I see very few of our county officials doing anything to stop this. It's almost as if they literally do not care about the people they've been elected to represent and they ought to be ashamed of themselves. I am ashamed for them.