

Linda Larson

I strongly encourage that all of Bonner County, Idaho be within the scoping area. Before moving forward with the permitting process, a year of actual data needs to be gathered from numerous downwind sites throughout Bonner County. Projections of our air and water quality are not adequate as there are few sensors in place now. Where similar smelters are in place nationally and internationally, data needs to be obtained by Ecology to supplement that provided by PacWest.

Two forms of likely impact come quickly to mind: traffic carrying fuels for the smelter or output from it, and pollution. To elaborate:

Traffic includes both truck and train. Let's take truck first. Highway 2/200 bisects several Bonner County communities and heavy truck traffic on it will have significant effects. What are the maintenance/expansion and social costs of this traffic for the decade after the smelter begins operations? Benefits? What are the crash/spill hazards? What preparation is needed to respond quickly and effectively? Who pays?

Rail: In the Sandpoint area, it is anticipated less than the needed emergency supplies are on hand for a major train derailment. There is no nearby, year-round boat launch. What are the costs of bringing these up to par for quick, effective response to a major derailment? Who will pay? Beyond Sandpoint, what are costs of securing a major derailment throughout Bonner County related to the smelter? Who pays?

How many trains would be required to haul the 100,000 odd tons of coal and quartz (each) per year and what route(s) will the trains take? This needs to be taken into consideration in the context of our current level of train traffic (50-60 trains per day through Sandpoint), anticipated increases in rail traffic with the BNSF expansion project (BNSF has not produced any numbers on this yet), and how increased volumes will impact overall quality of life.

Pollution: We hear many estimates of air pollutants to be emitted. For each community in Bonner County, what does that mean? What health risks increase? By how much? How does this pollution interact with/add to winter air stagnation (with wood smoke) and summer wildfire smoke? We are told that summertime wildfire smoke is the "new normal." It needs to be fully factored in to pollution calculations.

Visibility is important to our way of life and to our tourism industry. Fine particulates reduce visibility. How much will visibility be reduced, and in what seasons?

What happens when air pollutants settle on plants, soil and water? How is pH affected and what will these changes mean? Will fish or wildlife be affected? Our forestry industry?

Snow pack is important for drinking water, recreation and waterways. How will snowpack be affected? What will those impacts be on fish, drinking water availability and recreation?

Other impacts: What ongoing jobs will be created in Bonner County's communities? Pay scale and education/experience required to fill them? Which communities?