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As a resident of Whatcom County, I strongly and resolutely oppose any effort to reopen the Intalco aluminum smelter. Claims that the smelter can be a "green" industrial complex are nonsense.

As you know, despite curtailment, Ferndale's Intalco aluminum smelter continues to exceed safe emission levels of sulfur dioxide, a respiratory risk, in the region. This is unacceptable. The focus on 700 jobs versus the public health of all the residents of Whatcom county shows just how little incentive the county has to protect the health of its residents if jobs or tax revenue are at stake.

According to the proposed plans, the plant will need significant modification to produce "permanent and enforceable reductions to SO₂ emissions" at the facility, including the installation and operation of a sulfur dioxide emissions control system. The plant will also need to merge existing stacks and increase the height of the merged stacks, as well as limit facility-wide and unit-specific sulfur dioxide emissions. These proposed plans are not clearly tied to deadlines and monitoring results that must be met before the plant can open, they are simply requirements for continued operation. Based on the lax regulatory oversight of Cherry Point, I am not confident that the county or any other public agency will enforce these "plans." And even if they did, we are still left with a dirty not "green" industrial plant.

Whatcom county has become a dirty industry safe zone with open coal trains passing through Bellingham and other cities in the region to reach Cherry Point and the broken promises and outright lies of the fossil fuel companies located there. The Intalco project will significantly degrade an already dangerous health situation for residents. As well, the project demands a sweetheart deal to get cheap energy to make the plant profitable. Again, public health is being put at risk by subsidising a dirty industrial project with energy that could be used to support non-polluting, truly green industries.

We need good paying jobs and affordable housing in Whatcom County, but not by creating further pollution. The level of corruption of local political officials in terms of controlling dirty industries is well documented and should not be ignored. Even our elected officials are more interested in donor money and union jobs connected to dirty energy than the health of their constituents. This is sad, but true.

The bottom line is that Whatcom county needs to be encourage to attract real green companies and build an economy based on improving the health and well being of its residents, the environment, our tribal obligations and our imperiled wildlife. I am counting on you to make that happen by blocking the return of Intalco's dangerously polluting plant.