



Sravasti Abbey



692 Country Lane Newport WA, 99156-9658, USA

March 20, 2018

Founder and Abbess

Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron

Advisory Board:

Dagri Rinpoche
Sera Monastery

Geshe Kalsang Damdul
Drepung Monastery

Bhikshuni Tenzin Palmo
Dongyu Gatsal Ling
Nunnery

Bhikshuni Jendy
Chi Yuan Temple

Ajahn Sundara
Abhayagiri Buddhist
Monastery

Commissioners of Pend Oreille County
625 W 4th St, Newport, WA

Dear Karen Skoog, Mike Manus and Steve Kiss,

On behalf of all the monastics and the hundreds of people who annually visit Sravasti Abbey, we are deeply concerned and dismayed at the prospect of the silicon smelter that the Pend Oreille County is considering. As voters, we chose you to represent us and we trusted you to make the right decision for the county. With so many people in POC and Idaho opposed to the smelter, we request that you think deeply; are you fulfilling the trust we gave you?

Please consider the following steps to understand and appreciate what your constituents are asking of you:

- **pause, reflect, re-evaluate;**
- **do not re-zone the property currently owned by HiTestSand for the proposed silicon smelter;**
- **abandon the idea of putting a silicon smelter in Newport, WA;**
- **and gather the wisdom of all concerned citizens to come up with creative and innovative solutions to the financial growth of Pend Oreille County.**

In light of the glaring disconnect between the statements on the County's websites that extoll the physical beauty of our area and your interest in having a silicon smelter in Newport, WA, we are asking you to abandon HiTestSand's proposal for a silicon smelter. The Pend Oreille County website states: "Pend Oreille County is blessed not only with rare scenic beauty but with vast natural resources that early on allowed the timber and mining industries to thrive and they remain today among the region's largest employers."

Consider re-wording what is on the county's website to reflect where you are steering us at the moment: "Welcome to smelter-land, where toxic substances now pollute our once pure air, where coal dust gives people lung diseases, where water is polluted, and wildlife and people are suffering."

Friends notified us of the minutes of the Feb 26, 2018 meeting of the Pend Oreille County Board of Commissioners. Item 26 reads: "Motion was made by M. Manus to send a letter to Department of Ecology and to HiTestSand requesting to utilize local air quality data during the permitting process."

Does this mean that you are going to take advantage of the meteorological collection of data which has been described as the gold standard for PSD monitoring evaluation? If this is the case, we are rejoicing and we want to express our gratitude for this very wise

office.sravasti@gmail.com
www.sravasti.org
tel: 1-509-447-5549

decision!

As you know, this process takes about one year and will allow you and the people in the Pend Oreille planning department to slow this process down and look with wisdom at the far-reaching ramifications of having a polluting silicon smelting facility in our county.

The disadvantages of having a silicon smelter in our county are numerous and of grave concern.

- Since it is a given that smelter will emit carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, and silica dust, it is well-documented that **these substances contribute to acid rain and associated human health issues.**
- Emissions data disclosed in HiTestSand's Draft PSD Modeling state that the smelter would generate 320,000 tons of greenhouse gases, 760 tons of sulfur dioxide, and 700 tons of nitrogen oxides each year.
- This is roughly equivalent to the amount of greenhouse gases produced by 65,000 cars driving 11,000 miles each through the streets of Newport per year, and the amount of sulfur dioxide generated by burning 165,000 woodstoves continuously for 365 days per year on one acre.

At a meeting held at the Camus Centre sponsored by the Kalispel Tribe of Indians and "Responsible Growth – WA" January 23, 2018, we learned that the City of Newport had just denied HiTestSand the water that they need for the plant because they requested 240,000 gallons of water daily for the project.

- At the September 11, 2017 meeting in the Newport City Council Chambers we heard that 300 gallons of water per day would be needed for the proposed smelter. This dramatic difference in water amounts **raises questions about HiTestSand's credibility, and where is the 240,000 gallons of water going to come from?**
- The property that HiTestSand has purchased for the proposed smelter straddles two watersheds, the Little Spokane watershed and the Pend Oreille water shed. The Little Spokane watershed is already an over-allocated water system that has to go on water rationing at certain times of the year.

Transportation of raw materials is also an area of concern. An increase in truck and rail traffic will have an impact on the City of Newport in the form of noise and fossil fuel pollution, and wear and tear on the highways and Newport's roads.

Blue gem coal needed for the smelting process will be brought in by rail either from Kentucky or shipped from Colombia and then by rail from a seaport to Newport. The transport of coal continues to be hazardous and accidents are well documented. The Sierra Club published an article on the public health, safety and environmental impacts of coal.

- “Trains, trucks, and marine vessels hauling coal release toxic air pollutants, including nitrogen oxide (NOx) and particulate matter (PM) into the air, primarily through diesel exhaust.
- Health effects of NOx and PM include: Nitrogen oxides and PM2.5 are linked to **stunted lung development and hospital admissions for potentially fatal cardiac rhythm disturbances**. Diesel particulate matter (DPM) that is less than 2.5 microns in size, the most dangerous size, is emitted by the coal trains. PM2.5 concentrations in ambient air also increase the probability of hospital admission for heart attacks, ischemic heart diseases, disturbances of heart rhythm, and congestive heart failure.
- Coal trains are often over a mile long, and take five to seven minutes to clear road crossings; increased coal train traffic can leave emergency vehicles stranded behind trains and can have economic impacts on the parts of town that are cut off by the rail lines. **Some of the coal dust that leaves the coal trains will enter the surface stream system, degrading water quality.”**

Tourism and eco-tourism are ways to bring vitality and financial gain to a place of beauty. The presence of a silicon smelter polluting the air, the water, the noise of transport vehicles and the visual appearance of the physical plant will ensure that we will not attract any visitors to the area.

It is counterintuitive to even imagine such a facility in our area that has such natural beauty; a place that families move to, to raise their children, a place where people wish to retire, a place where people come to enjoy the wonderfully rich and varied year round outdoor opportunities that the Pend Oreille River, Pend Oreille Lake, and the surrounding area provides.

Are you still in line with noble, ethical and caring aspirations to care for the citizens and the natural environment now and for the future? Do you remember what inspired you to seek public office? Do you remember the reasons you shared with your family and friends about why you were seeking public office and what you hoped to achieve as a commissioner of Pend Oreille County? **As voters, we chose you to represent us and we trusted you to make the right decision for the county. With so many people in POC and Idaho opposed to the smelter, we request that you think deeply; are you fulfilling the trust we gave you?**

Turn your ears and eyes away from HiTestSand and listen to your constituents who are upset and investing vast amounts of time and energy to convince you that we don't want a silicon smelter. **Do not re-zone the property currently owned by HiTestSand.** It is not too late to change your mind and abandon HiTestSand's proposal for a silicon smelter. In doing so, harmony in the county will be restored. The energy and passion that has been invested in opposing the smelter can then be harnessed to find new solutions to building a healthy economy for the county.

With the goals of the county restored, you will then have the full support of your constituents, our equally concerned neighbors in Idaho, and the beauty of Pend Oreille County will be preserved for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Greene	<i>Cheryl Greene</i>
Nancy Nesbitt	<i>Nancy Nesbitt</i>
Dianne Pratt	<i>Dianne Pratt</i>
Marguerite Robert	<i>Marguerite Robert</i>
Xuequn Pan	<i>Xuequn Pan</i>
Lynn Gebetsberger	<i>Lynn Gebetsberger</i>
Hsiao Yin Low	<i>Hsiao Yin Low</i>

Janet Howell	<i>Janet Howell</i>
Barbara McDaniel	<i>Barbara McDaniel</i>
Dallas Becker	<i>Dallas Becker</i>
Terri Chambers	<i>Terri Chambers</i>
Thao Phan	<i>Thao Phan</i>
Brian Lawson	<i>Brian Lawson</i>
Rebecca Bradley	<i>Rebecca Bradley</i>