**Moral and Religious/Faith Concerns About the Newport Smelter**

In reflecting upon the smelter proposed to be built in Newport Washington, a number of moral and religious concerns come to the surface. In particular, it would seem that the construction of such smelter would do the following harms:

* Violates our obligation to tend and care for creation. Most religious and faith traditions in this region believe that humans are called to be stewards of creation, to tend and care for the natural world of which we are a part and upon which we depend. This smelter poses a threat to the Creator’s natural world. (In particular, by harming the air, land and water of our region and contributing to climate change, this smelter undoes the work of creation and violates our sacred duty to be stewards of the earth.)
* Goes against the cultural ethos of Washington state, a community which sees itself as particularly blessed by the beauty of nature and committed to protecting and enjoying this natural beauty in ways that support and recreate human communities that live here. The ethos of Washington is different from other regions of the country, and this is exhibited in our commitment to environmental concerns and natural beauty. This smelter violates that ethos.
* Violates the notion of environmental justice and engages in a form of environmental racism. All too often toxic polluters in our society are dumped in poor communities of underprivileged persons, imposing an unjust ecological burden upon the poorest and least defended among us. This injustice is deepened when the communities affected are racial minorities who suffer so many other injustices in our society, and this constitutes a form of environmental racism. In this particular case, the native communities who have expressed their concern about this smelter are the same people who have a centuries-long tradition of protecting and honoring the lands under threat, and who have suffered pervasive injustice. To impose this threat upon these Native American communities is a terrible form of environmental racism.
* Violates proportionality. Harmful impacts are sometimes justified by the preponderance of benefits produced by the act in question. But in the case of this smelter, the benefits are in serious question, may not help the overall environment, and do produce real harm to the region and to local communities who are underprivileged, poor and have already suffered extensive injustice.

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