

CFAC issue isn't over

Letters

A growing number of Columbia Falls and Flathead-area residents are coming together to form the Coalition for a Clean CFAC. Our mission is to secure the comprehensive cleanup of the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) Superfund site for the health, enjoyment, and economic benefit of the local community and the protection of the Flathead watershed.

Over 100 letters from the public were submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in August 2023 with the vast majority indicating the EPA's "Preferred Alternative" Plan is unacceptable. Of significant concern are the comments of former employ With these letters and the public hearings held June 28th, the community has expressed our dismay that the EPA intends to leave the toxic waste in place with the use of "protective covers, excavation, and consolidation in a central repository, slurry walls, long-term monitoring, and access controls such as fencing."

Leaving the Waste in Place is not a solution. It imposes long-term risks and costs to our community and county that fail to meet federal Superfund goals for permanent solutions, and fails to reduce the volume of toxic waste that, over time, has the potential to affect water seeping to the nearby Flathead River as well as private wells. It fails to provide opportunities for economic reuse and ecological recovery of the site. The option of off-site removal of toxic waste was never seriously considered as it was deemed too expensive, but no actual cost estimate was ever produced. The results of potential seismic and flooding events were not considered. It's time to insist these studies be done. Superfund sites don't have to become permanent waste dumps.

The Coalition is seeking citizen's help in getting our message across to governmental leaders and the EPA. The time is short before the EPA makes their final decision. We'll be in touch.

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