

My name is John Pundyk and I have been a realtor in the Crowsnest Pass for the past 22 years, prior to this, and starting in 1979 at Syncrude, I was employed in the energy industry in many different parts of Alberta.

My strong support for the Benga Mining Project is based on my personal knowledge of our local economy and demographics. Also, I am confident Canada, and Alberta, have some of the most rigorous environmental policies and enforcement. Our closest competitors are in the US and in the Russian Siberia.

Crowsnest Pass has a population of 5,600 permanent residents, as well as, a substantial number of non-permanent residents. Unlike many other jurisdictions, 85% of our property tax intake is from the residential tax roll.

The tax burden on the residents slowly increased throughout my entire career here and, without cutting services, it is not sustainable in the long run.

Crowsnest Pass is a paradox. It is a mining town without a mine, and therefore, no municipal tax benefits.

Just to the west of us, within less than 100 km radius, Teck steelmaking coal mines have a workforce of 4,454 strong. Crowsnest Pass has 454 people working directly for Teck, and hundreds of others who work for the large number of contractors supporting the mines. This is why so many people in the community support modern steelmaking coal mines.

Teck spends about \$650 millions on their operations in the Elk Valley, creating countless other jobs.

It is also worth pointing out, they have allocated hundreds of millions in additional expenditures to improve their water runoff management and mine reclamation activities. These efforts have legions of critics. But imagine for a second the impact these mines would have, if they were operated by someone else, and in a place like Siberia.

In Canada, environmental controls are taken seriously and are a huge cost to the operators of mines as they compete with jurisdictions which are not so regulated. We should recognize these efforts, as it is often just easier to criticize.

To this day there is no practical method to make the volumes of steel the world needs without the use of coke. Making new steel requires carbon, which requires coke, which in turn requires steelmaking coal to make coke. Steel is one the most recycled materials in the world, yet as we recycle steel, every year we need more steel to build transportation, bridges, schools, hospitals, and everything that many of us just take for granted.

While China has lifted hundreds of millions of its people out of poverty, this process is just starting in many other places. In 2017, India used only 65 kg of steel per person, Africa, on average, fared worse at 28 kg per person. In Canada, we have used 443 kg of steel per person. We can quibble about the statistical methodology, but the correlation is clear.

The global demand for new steel will keep rising, even as we adapt and embrace many new technologies. Wind energy, just as one example, is very steel intensive.

There is no contradiction in supporting the Benga steelmaking coal mine, and in supporting a clean environment. We have just added two new protected areas just south from the Crowsnest Pass and supporting the new mine just north of the Crowsnest Pass, creates a natural balance between economy and conservation.