



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF DRINKING WATER

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August 16, 2022

Chelsea Morris
Washington State Department of Ecology
PO Box 47696
Olympia, WA 98504-7696

Subject: CAFO General Permit Comments

Dear Ms. Morris,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) General Permit. Washington State Department of Health's Office of Drinking Water (ODW) has primacy for implementing the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Act, including source water protection (SWP) requirements. In this role, ODW works to meet EPA's Strategic Plan Objective 1.2 to provide Clean and Safe Water and "sustainably manage programs to support drinking water, aquatic ecosystems, and recreational, economic, and subsistence activities." This letter supplies the Washington State Department of Ecology (ECY) with information on how CAFO permits can protect source water.

As it relates to source water protection, we noted that:

- Specific to land application, there appears to be a disparity in drinking water protections between the combined and state-only permits. The combined permit states that permittees must use field discharge management practices to limit the discharge of pollutants to any down-gradient surface waters, open tile line intake structures, sinkholes, agricultural or drinking water well heads, or other conduits to surface or groundwater. Language in the state-only permit is significantly different and focuses on surface water. We support incorporating consistent public drinking wellhead protection language into both permits.

Additionally, we would like to work collaboratively with Ecology on the following items:

- Would it be possible, as part of the permit application for new facilities, to notify local water systems of their application so that the CAFOs that pose a potential contaminant source to wellhead protection areas can be inventoried as required for SWP?
- As lagoons were constructed under different versions of the USDA/NRCS standards, we support groundwater monitoring of lagoons and composting areas when the reasonable potential impacts assessment demonstrates risks to groundwater. We would like to partner with Ecology to understand the reasonable potential impact assessments and subsequent risk to groundwater.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments and look forward to working with you in greater detail to protect the source waters of the state of Washington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Holly R. Myers".

Holly R. Myers
Director, Office of Drinking Water
Environmental Public Health
Washington State Department of Health