

Derek Benedict

Dear Department of Ecology,

I am an ecological and environmentally aware Washington resident and I am writing to share my concerns with you regarding the Draft Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) General Permits proposed in June 2022 (the "draft permit"), currently open to public comment.

I'm greatly concerned that the draft permit does not require sufficient protections to prevent pollution from entering our waterways, including but not limited to: adequate technology to prevent leaks from manure storage, best management practices for fields such as science-based riparian buffers, sufficient controls for land-based manure application, or sufficient water quality monitoring and reporting. These concerns have been raised by members of the public in the past, and the Appellate Court's recent opinion affirms that these issues must be addressed. I am also concerned that Ecology has not adequately addressed or mitigated the climate impacts that can be caused by CAFOs, nor the impacts CAFOs can have on nearby communities—including communities impacted by environmental injustices.

Published science documents that excess nitrates, E. coli, fecal coliform bacteria, and various other pollutants coming from unregulated and poorly regulated CAFOs have damaged Washington's waterways and harmed communities. As a Washingtonian it is important for me that Ecology leverage the best available science and known modern technologies—as required by the Clean Water Act—to protect the environment and people from water pollution coming from CAFOs. It is also important to me that Ecology live up to its obligations and commitments to Tribes and Indigenous persons, including by protecting salmon from water pollution that can be caused by CAFOs.

In the final permit, Ecology should at least make the following major changes: (1) implement modern technologies to prevent leakage from waste storage facilities and lagoons; (2) implement stronger soil, surface, and groundwater monitoring requirements that will sufficiently detect pollution; (3) safeguard against the overapplication of manure to land; and (4) implement meaningful discharge limitation standards and best management practices based on science—such as riparian buffers—to comply with water quality standards and keep our waterways fishable, swimmable, and drinkable. In short, I urge Ecology to comply with the recent court order to implement reasonable, science-based protections for people, water, and aquatic life from pollution from CAFOs.

Respectfully,

Derek Benedict