

Erika Thorne

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Representative,

Thank you for the chance to comment on this important issue. My name is Erika Thorne. I live in Minneapolis. I care about this issue because I grew up in rural Iowa in the 50's & 60's: Family farms, corn, livestock in more-natural settings with no feedlots. I am heartbroken about how farming has devolved in my lifetime. We have a LOT on our hands to undo the damage wrought on our land & environment by corporate farming. Ag Secretary Butts did a lot to speed this up.

I am glad to see some of the changes and updates that the agency has proposed for the new NPDES and SDS permits. Many of them are commonsense ways to protect our shared land, water, and communities from the harmful effects of CAFOs, and I want to share my support for these changes, including:

- Protecting our shared groundwater
- Protecting surface waters by limiting manure application.

- Monitoring spreading by requiring the permit holder to do visual inspections of all land application areas.

- Helping with clean-up and accountability by requiring the permit holder to do water sampling after a manure discharge event.

- And making our rules consistent by requiring people who buy manure from a permit holding operation or who spread manure for one follow the permit requirements.

These new changes are a good start to what must be done. They also leave quite a bit of room for improvement. Here is what I think would make it stronger and would bring it closer to what people like me and my neighbors need:

- The requirement should be for those practices to be followed should be extended to all lands where manure is applied.

- Require permit holders to share their monitoring information with the agency, and the public. Communities that are at risk of CAFO pollution and its effects deserve to know that permits are being followed, and allow local people to help the agency ensure that permit requirements are being met. Everyone needs to be involved!

- Require more proactive water samplings. These permits should require water sampling and testing be done regularly around the permit holding site and where liquid manure from the site is being spread so that the agency and the public can know that long-term damage and contamination is not occurring.

Require that new constructions of manure basins and new lands used for spreading undergo water sampling and testing before construction or spreading, to establish a baseline nutrient load.

THANK YOU for strengthening Minnesota's NPDES and SDS permits! Please continue these steps and incorporate some of the much-needed changes above into your new permit. Let's make these new permits something that will protect all Minnesotans!

Thank you,

(your name)