

Dear Community Members,

First off, I wanted to introduce myself. My name is Brady Koehl, & I have now lived in Stevens County for 32 years & counting (with a brief hiatus to attend college in Marshall, MN). I am a resident of Hancock, MN – I am a father, husband, farmer, accountant, city council member, & community volunteer. This isn't really my cup of tea to make a public comment, but the more I thought about it, the more I thought there were some things I needed to say on this matter.

I do want to start off by saying, I understand & acknowledge the environmental concerns. As farmers in greater MN, this is something that we are conscious of every day. As everything scales, & the size of the equipment, livestock herds, & everything in between grows larger – this can seem very intimidating & can be perceived in a negative way by many. I am here to tell you we are hyper aware of this. However, I take comfort in knowing that an operation like Riverview has already done more than their share of due diligence on a project of this nature, including the necessary research in the background, permitting, etc. to make sure that this is done in the correct way. This type of operation already operates under strict regulatory oversight, & the systems are in place to meet MPCA requirements.

Further, I wanted to dig a little bit into some of the specific concerns. I have heard comments about the size of the dairy, & the emissions from the animals., etc. Keep in mind – this dairy will be large, but half of the dairy is already in existence! Yes, the dairy that will be operating after the expansion will be the largest in MN. But it is not all new construction – half is already operating smoothly today. On top of this, I would encourage you to explore some of the positive things that Riverview is already doing to offset many of these concerns. From ensuring the operation is energy efficient as possible – this is something that is done in the name of cost – to capturing the methane gas & re-purposing this in an environmentally friendly way, the operation is only helped by reducing these things.


I have also heard concerns with the manure that will be a byproduct of this increased herd. As a farmer that has used this bi-product, the misconceptions of this being a negative for the land & water are often mis-cast. Regardless of the form, farmers need fertilizer as part of their crop plan. The larger percentage that comes from organic matter sources, the more positive of an impact there is the potential for on the land. Also – as a farmer that is in the business of organic production, this manure becomes a necessity & helps drive the growth in that area of our business.

Finally, the water. This is a concern, & I know this is something that has been seen around the nation. However, in a highly rural area like Stevens County, the water issues that are

often tied to overuse or strain on local water systems in more densely populated or drought-prone areas have not come to light. As we become more efficient with our water use, more intentional with our practices, & are conscious of the numerous issues with water around the nation, & around the world – this is being considered, measured, studied, & remedied wherever possible. On top of this – Riverview has a plan in place to re-use much of the water that is in the end-product that is a key cog of this expansion plan. I would encourage you to ask their representatives about this, as it is a very cool concept.

Finally, to anyone reading this that is not familiar with Stevens County, I would encourage you to come & pay us a visit. This area is special & is uniquely positioned to pursue this kind of opportunity. We tend to join as one in support of projects of this nature, & we recognize the many benefits that Riverview has brought to our community, our families, & to the many individuals that are involved with the economics of the area. On top of that, on the drive west past the existing west-river dairy, I am reminded of the beauty of the countryside that we are lucky enough to live in. When you drive past, yes, you will note the operation. But I would encourage you to reach out & ask for a tour & explore more before you develop an opinion. If you would like to talk about this – feel free to reach out to me – I am happy to discuss both sides of the arguments for & against this expansion. I am always open to more information.

Sincerely,



Brady Koehl

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