

April 6, 2026

Dear Minnesota Pollution Control Agency,

I am writing to respectfully request that the MPCA require a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed West River Dairy expansion project. I am a Stevens County livestock farmer, and former dairy farmer, with firsthand experience of the effect that consolidation in the dairy industry has had on limiting access to markets for small and mid-sized dairy farms.

Given the unprecedented scale of this project, a more comprehensive environmental review is both reasonable and necessary. A project of this magnitude carries the potential for significant environmental effects that extend beyond what can be adequately evaluated in an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW).

I am particularly concerned about the projected water use and the cumulative impact on regional aquifers. An EIS would provide a more detailed assessment of these demands and their sustainability over time.

Additionally, the potential impacts on groundwater and surface water quality in the region warrants deeper examination. The proposed manure storage and land application plan raises important questions about nutrient runoff and nitrate contamination. Given the vulnerability of local water resources, including those connected to the Pomme de Terre watershed, these risks deserve a more rigorous and transparent analysis.

Beyond environmental concerns, the size and scope of this project raise broader questions about the long term socioeconomic impact across the state and region. I am passionate about thriving rural communities and feel strongly that we all benefit from more farmers on the land.

In this instance specifically, an EIS feels like commonsense guardrails that serve the greater good. An EIS would ensure that all potential impacts are thoroughly studied, that alternatives are meaningfully considered, and that the public has a fuller opportunity to engage with the decision-making process. Given the significance of this proposal, anything less would fall short of the level of scrutiny this project deserves.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your commitment to protecting Minnesota's natural resources and communities.

Sincerely,  
Carrie Redden, Chokio