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5/6/26

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Comments in Support of West River Dairy Expansion EAW

Dear MPCA Staff,

My name is Jordan Staples, and I am writing in support of the proposed West River Dairy expansion. I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW).

I was born in 1995 and raised on my family's farm located approximately one mile west of the West River Dairy site. My family has farmed in this area for decades, and I continue to actively farm today alongside my dad and brother. Because of this, I have both a lifelong perspective as a neighbor and firsthand operational experience. Since 2019, I have also worked directly with West River Dairy during silage harvest, which has allowed me to closely observe their management practices, equipment, and attention to detail.

Given that I have lived near the facility since it was built in 2004, I would like to offer the following specific, experience-based comments relevant to the EAW:

Air Quality and Odor (EAW Sections on Air Emissions and Feed Storage)

Living just one mile west of the dairy for over 20 years, I have experienced normal agricultural odors like any livestock operation in a rural area, but I have not encountered persistent or excessive odor issues attributable to West River Dairy. Odor events have been infrequent and typically short-lived, often associated with manure application windows that are common across all farms in the area. From what I have observed, their feed storage and silage management practices are well maintained, which helps limit spoilage and associated emissions. Based on this long-term experience, the EAW's conclusions regarding manageable air quality impacts are consistent with real-world conditions.

Water Quality and Manure Management (EAW Sections on Land Application and Runoff Controls)

As someone actively involved in crop production and who has worked alongside their team and other contracted operators during silage harvest, I have seen how seriously they take manure management. Their application practices appear to follow agronomic rates and are

timed appropriately with crop needs. Fields are incorporated and managed in a way that reduces runoff risk, especially during sensitive times of the year. Over the years, I have not observed issues such as manure runoff into ditches or surface waters that would indicate poor management. If an instance occurs, they have a well-planned emergency plan that would be activated. From a neighbor's perspective who depends on the same land and water resources, this is significant. They also have plans for their storage facility to be designed at a much higher standard than what is required by law which I see as a big step for Riverview to show they are willing to help protect our land and water quality.

Soils, Groundwater, and Long-Term Land Stewardship (EAW Sections on Geology and Hydrology)

Our farm shares similar soils and landscape characteristics, so I pay close attention to how nearby operations manage these resources. West River Dairy has demonstrated long-term stewardship of the land through consistent crop production and responsible nutrient use. The practices described in the EAW regarding manure storage, handling, and land application align with what I have seen in the field. Based on more than two decades of observation, I have not seen evidence of groundwater or soil degradation attributable to their operation.

Traffic and Local Infrastructure (EAW Sections on Transportation)

As a neighboring farmer who regularly travels the same local roads, I have firsthand experience with traffic associated with the dairy, especially during planting and harvest seasons. The increase in truck and equipment traffic has been manageable and consistent with what is expected in an agricultural community. Drivers associated with the dairy have generally operated safely and respectfully on rural roads. If they have an issue they address it quickly with a response to those operators and along with dust management on gravel roads. Based on current operations, I do not anticipate the expansion creating traffic impacts beyond what local infrastructure can reasonably handle. If future repairs or reconstruction are needed on local county road, I would presume their additional tax base to the local county would attribute to that. They also do work to help maintain the gravel roads during any high use times during harvest.

Accuracy of the EAW and Operational Practices

Because I have worked directly with the dairy since 2019 during silage harvest, I have seen the scale of their operation up close. The EAW's description of a well-managed, modern dairy operation reflects what I have experienced personally. Their equipment, labor, and management practices demonstrate a high level of professionalism and efficiency, which directly contributes to minimizing environmental risks.

Potential for Significant Environmental Effects (EIS Consideration)

Having lived near this operation since its construction in 2004 and worked with it in recent years, I have not observed significant environmental impacts that would suggest a need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The existing operation has functioned for over 20 years without creating major environmental concerns in our area. Based on that history and the management practices I have observed, I do not believe the proposed expansion is likely to result in significant environmental effects beyond those already evaluated in the EAW.

In closing, my perspective comes from both being a neighbor for over two decades and a farmer who works directly with West River Dairy. I rely on the same land, water, and rural infrastructure, and I would not support this project if I believed it posed a significant environmental risk. Based on my experience, the dairy has operated responsibly, and the expansion is consistent with those established practices.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Jordan Staples

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