

# Andrew Steiner

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Andrew Steiner, and I am writing as a local resident, a high school agricultural educator, and a small business owner in the Morris area. I have toured Riverview facilities several times over the years and regularly bring high school students to visit their dairy operations as part of our agricultural education program. I also know many Riverview employees and managers personally. Based on my experiences and what I have seen firsthand, I support this project and believe the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) process is sufficient. I do not believe a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is necessary.

One thing that has been disappointing to see during the comment period is how many opinions seem to come from people who are unfamiliar with the area or with Riverview's operations. Riverview has built a very strong reputation in our community. Their facilities are well run, and they have always been willing to host tours and answer questions. Every time I have visited with students, the facilities have been clean, organized, and clearly managed with professionalism and attention to detail.

Some of the concerns raised about manure management also appear to overlook the fact that these systems are already heavily regulated. Projects like this must operate under MPCA feedlot permits and detailed manure management plans. In this case, the proposed facility includes more than a year of manure storage capacity and access to far more acres for manure application than are actually required. Those requirements exist specifically to protect water quality and ensure nutrients are applied responsibly.

I would also encourage reviewers to look carefully at the actual water monitoring data for the watershed. Monitoring in the Pomme de Terre River watershed has shown that overall water quality conditions and biological health have remained relatively stable over the past decade, even though agriculture has been a major land use in this region for generations. Concerns about impacts to waters such as the Pomme de Terre River, Drywood Creek, and Muddy Creek should be evaluated in the context of this long-term data.

Another concern raised by some commenters involves water use. Groundwater withdrawals for projects like this are reviewed and permitted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. That process exists specifically to ensure aquifers are used sustainably. It is important to remember that many other industries and communities also rely on groundwater, and all of them are regulated through the same permitting process.

Beyond the environmental review, it is also important to recognize the role Riverview plays in our local economy. As a small business owner, I see firsthand how much large employers like Riverview contribute to the stability of rural communities. Their operations support local suppliers, contractors, and many other small businesses throughout the region.

Riverview has also been extremely supportive of agricultural education. As a teacher, I think it is important for students to see what modern agriculture actually looks like. Riverview has consistently opened their doors to students so they can learn about animal care, technology, and the science behind food production. Those opportunities are incredibly valuable for young people who

are interested in agriculture and environmental careers.

In closing, I encourage the agencies reviewing this project to rely on the available data and the existing regulatory process. From what I have seen personally and from what the monitoring data shows, the EAW has already provided a thorough review of potential environmental impacts. For those reasons, I believe the EAW is sufficient and that preparation of a full Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Steiner

## **Public Comment on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW)**

### **West River Dairy Expansion – Riverview, LLP**

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