

## Minnesota AgriGrowth (Darin Broton)

After reviewing the EAW for Riverview's proposed expansion at West River Dairy, the state's environmental review of the project is comprehensive and complete. While data on water use for many other large water-user projects in Minnesota are not public or unclear, the state's EAW process for feedlots includes water use. In this case, the water needed for the West River Dairy expansion will be supplied from a previously vetted and permitted source. The well that West River Dairy proposes to use as its water source was originally permitted for 452 million gallons per year. West River Dairy now proposes reducing that total water appropriation by half, to 226 million gallons per year. Additionally, West River Dairy will construct water storage basins as a contingency and climate-resiliency measure.

Riverview has a proven track record of environmental stewardship, including continuous efforts to reduce water use and the construction of innovative water-recapture basins to reduce reliance on a single water source. In addition, Riverview has been a leader in manure management plans, ensuring that not only is manure appropriately managed onsite, but also when transferred to other farms. The West River Dairy expansion will provide an organic fertilizer source for thousands of acres in the area, reducing reliance on synthetic fertilizers and helping reduce nutrient runoff potential from farmland, and improving soil health.

Lastly, some submitted public comments have suggested the need for an Environmental Impact Statement due to the expansion's potential economic impact on local dairy farms. The purpose of an Environmental Impact Statement is to assess potential significant environmental impacts of the proposed project, not create public policy on the appropriate size of dairies in Minnesota. The legislature is best suited to determine how best to support Minnesota's dairy farmers and the overall dairy industry. Weaponizing environmental review and permitting to address broader economic policy issues is inappropriate and undermines the state's environmental regulatory process.

As a reminder, the MPCA has numerous tools at its disposal to ensure Minnesota's waters are protected, including issuing an individual permit with additional conditions rather than a general feedlot permit. We encourage the MPCA to use science and data when using those tools.