

Jennifer Vogt-Erickson

Dear MPCA,

I am writing in regard to water quality threats that a very large confinement dairy operation would pose to Stevens County.

My connection to the area is that I graduated from the University of Minnesota-Morris in 1998. I was once startled to encounter cows standing in the Pomme de Terre River as I canoed around a bend in the river with a friend. Manure dropping directly in the river is not great, and that was a small herd.

I also grew up on a farm myself and am familiar with many of the issues facing farmers and rural communities. Concentration in agriculture has greatly reduced the number of farms and led to consolidation of schools, hospitals, and businesses in rural areas in my lifetime.

The proposed expansion would be like having 180 conventional dairy farms concentrated in one place, but it's only promising about 40 extra jobs. The potential for a hazardous release of manure would be much greater, and the people hired to work on the farm do not have the same incentive to care for the land, animals and facilities the way that an owner-operator would. Climate change may also make flooding events more severe. All of these factors increase the risk of environmental damage posed by this project.

Because of the elevated environmental risk this project would impose on Stevens County, I ask that Riverview be required to do a full Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Vogt-Erickson