

Laura Cullip

To Minnesota Pollution Control Agency,

I am writing as a concerned citizen, landowner, and farmer in MN regarding the West River Dairy Expansion. My concerns are environmental, economic, and to the overall health of the MN community. Nationally and in MN, we are in an economic farm crisis with small farms struggling to pay their bills and continue their farming livelihood due to low market prices and high costs of inputs, rental price of land, and difficulty competing against a few larger and larger farm operations. An expansion of this size is not of an economic benefit to MN. It continues a trend of inequality in agriculture with just a few farmers monopolizing the market and animals, while the smaller farms are often kept out of markets, milk trucks won't come to their farm, they can't compete on land rental prices, milk prices plummet, and ultimately smaller farmers can't compete and stay in business. Our land, economy, and communities suffer when family farms go out of business and business is consolidated into a few.

Environmentally, this is altogether too many animals, too much water usage, and too much manure consolidated into one location. It is an outrageous and egregious example of consolidation. This site is within 5 miles of 8 different protected waterfowl and wildlife protection areas. There needs to be a full environmental review in the form of an EIS so that local residents have the opportunity to weigh in on the impacts this project may have on them, their farms, their community, the wildlife, and landscape. If there are no environmental, community or economic issues with having 26,397 animal units in one location, then let the EIS process illustrate that and give citizens an opportunity to weigh in for further review. We need full transparency and accountability in this permitting process. Otherwise it looks like the largest dairy operation in MN gets to leverage their market monopoly, influence, and power to favor their individual business over what is best for the community, environment, and local farming community.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Laura Cullip

Hutchinson, MN