

# Erin Larson

Dear Commissioner Kessler and MPCA Staff,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed expansion of West River Dairy near Morris, Minnesota. Having followed this process and reviewed the comments of neighbors, farmers, environmentalists, and agricultural organizations who know Riverview's operations firsthand, I am confident that this expansion represents not only a sound economic investment in our region, but a genuine step forward for environmental stewardship in Minnesota agriculture.

A common misconception is that expanding livestock operations is inherently at odds with environmental protection. The reality is exactly the opposite when the operator is as committed to best practices as Riverview has proven to be. Today's dairies operate in a vastly more regulated and technologically advanced environment than previous generations. Riverview employs precision nutrient management planning, rigorous soil testing, controlled manure application schedules tied to field conditions and seasonal timing, and data-driven monitoring systems that continuously verify environmental compliance.

One particularly compelling environmental benefit of this expansion is water stewardship. As noted by supporters familiar with Riverview's infrastructure, more than half of the water used during normal rainfall years comes from captured impervious surface runoff stored on-site. This kind of forward-thinking water management is exactly the approach we should be encouraging in Minnesota agriculture, and it sets a model for the entire industry.

Perhaps the most under-appreciated environmental benefit of these well-managed dairies is what happens to the manure. Far from being a pollutant, manure managed according to Minnesota's nutrient management standards becomes a valuable agricultural resource. Certified Crop Advisors and farmers in the region surrounding Riverview's existing facilities have documented real improvements in soil health, including increased organic matter, better soil structure, and reduced erosion. These may be outcomes that no commercial synthetic fertilizer can fully replicate.

This project is not proceeding without scrutiny. It is undergoing one of the most thorough environmental review processes available in state government. Multiple farmers, agronomists, and community members who have worked alongside Riverview for years have affirmed in their comments that the company's mindset is not merely to meet regulatory minimums but to exceed them. The MPCA's existing permitting and oversight framework, including nutrient management plan requirements, manure application restrictions, setbacks, and monitoring obligations, is specifically designed for farms like this one. Requiring an Environmental Impact Statement beyond the already comprehensive Environmental Assessment Worksheet process would be redundant given the available data and Riverview's well-documented compliance history.

Rural communities like Morris and Stevens County depend on operations like West River Dairy to sustain local economies, keep family farms viable through crop and harvest partnerships, and support the schools, businesses, and infrastructure that make rural life possible. But these economic

benefits do not come at the expense of the environment - they are paired with it. Riverview's long-standing working relationship with the MPCA, its transparent engagement with neighboring landowners, and its consistent investment in environmental improvements demonstrate that responsible growth and environmental protection reinforce each other.

Approving this expansion sends exactly the right signal: that Minnesota welcomes responsible agriculture and that operators who do things the right way will be able to grow and continue serving their communities.

I respectfully urge the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to approve the West River Dairy Expansion. The environmental safeguards in place are rigorous. Riverview's track record is strong. The benefits to soil health, water stewardship, nutrient recycling, and the broader regional agricultural ecosystem are real and well-documented. This is the kind of project the permitting process was designed to review and approve and it deserves to move forward.

Sincerely,

Erin Larson  
Morris, MN  
Stevens County

April 1, 2026

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
ATTN: Charles Peterson  
520 Lafayette Road North  
St. Paul, MN 55155

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### **Modern Dairy Operations Are Good for the Environment**

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### **Manure as a Resource: Soil Health and Reduced Inputs**

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### **Minnesota's Regulatory Framework**

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### **Environmental Responsibility and Rural Vitality Are Not in Conflict**

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relationship with the MPCA, its transparent engagement with neighboring landowners, and its consistent investment in environmental improvements demonstrate that responsible growth and environmental protection reinforce each other.

Approving this expansion sends exactly the right signal: that Minnesota welcomes responsible agriculture and that operators who do things the right way will be able to grow and continue serving their communities.

### **Conclusion**

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