

Lucas Koehl

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

My name is Lucas Koehl, and I am a neighbor, local resident and farmer in Darnen Township in Stevens County. Our farm and my family's house is located directly between Riverview's West River Dairy and Riverview Dairy and less than 1 mile from the Pomme de Terre River. I am writing in support of the proposed **West River Dairy Expansion**.

Based on my experience and observations, Riverview Dairy operates with professionalism, integrity, and environmental responsibility. Their facilities are well-maintained, clean, and organized, and their teams are committed to doing things the right way.

As a farmer that utilizes manure on our own farm and works with Riverview to responsibly field apply their manure, I recognize that manure management and water use are highly regulated in Minnesota. Riverview strives to follow these regulations, including nutrient management planning, soil testing, proper application rates, and timing based on field conditions. From what I have seen, their mindset is to meet and exceed these standards to ensure responsible stewardship.

Based on my experience permitting wells on our own farm, I have complete confidence that the well permitting process in Minnesota protects our water resources. I have also had my own residential well water tested in the last few years, and the nitrate levels - (.03 mg/L) are far below MPCA's safe drinking water standard of 10 mg/L. Riverview's dairies have been operating in the neighborhood for 20 -30 years and there has been livestock production here for generations.

The use of manure as a nutrient source has clear benefits for local farms, including improved soil health, increased organic matter and reduced erosion. Farmers today put a tremendous value on manure as a resource, utilizing it at agronomically sound rates, displacing commercial fertilizer that they would otherwise purchase to produce their crops. This supports long-term agricultural sustainability.

Riverview has also been a strong community partner, supporting farmers (my family operates a business harvesting feed and field applying manure for Riverview), creating jobs, (I am a former employee) maintaining roads, (like the one in front of my house) and investing in schools and local programs. Their communication with neighbors and officials reflects their commitment to being a good neighbor.

I understand that this project is undergoing environmental review through the state's established process — one of the most rigorous in the region— and provides adequate oversight for this project. Based on the available data, existing regulations, and Riverview's proven track record, I am confident this project can continue to operate responsibly. I believe the current review process is sufficient and that additional regulatory burdens are unnecessary.

I feel like there have been many comments on this project from those who do not understand modern agricultural practices and lack appreciation for the permitting process that is in place. Many that are in agriculture today (including Riverview) have earned to be where they are through responsible stewardship of our natural resources.

In closing, I respectfully encourage the appropriate agencies to approve the West River Dairy Expansion. This project supports local agriculture, strengthens rural communities, and reflects a responsible approach to environmental stewardship. I also believe that an EIS is not necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

Sincerely,

Lucas Koehl
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