

Jackie Junker

To the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency,

I am writing as a concerned citizen regarding the proposed West River Dairy Expansion in Stevens County. While I understand the importance of agriculture to Minnesota's economy, I have serious concerns about the scale of this project and its potential impacts on both animal welfare and the environment.

An operation of this size, housing nearly 19,000 dairy cows, raises significant questions about the humane treatment of animals. Industrial-scale dairies often limit natural behaviors, increase stress, and can lead to higher rates of injury and illness if not carefully managed. I urge the MPCA to closely evaluate how animal welfare standards will be maintained at this facility and whether current oversight is sufficient at this scale.

Additionally, the environmental risks are substantial. Large dairy operations produce enormous quantities of manure, which can threaten groundwater, surface water, and air quality if not properly handled. In a rural area like Stevens County, where many residents rely on well water, the potential for contamination is especially concerning. Odor, emissions, and nutrient runoff could also negatively impact nearby communities and ecosystems.

I respectfully ask the MPCA to ensure that this Environmental Assessment Worksheet fully and transparently addresses these concerns, and to require the highest standards of environmental protection and animal care before any permits are considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and for your commitment to protecting Minnesota's environment and communities. Jackie