

# Garrett Luthens

Dear Mr. Peterson,

I am a dairy farmer, and I am writing in support of Riverview LLP's proposed expansion of West River Dairy near Morris, Minnesota. My family owns and operates Skyview Dairy, a second-generation dairy that has been in operation since 1968, when my father started milking seven cows.

I am not writing this letter merely to support one company's project. I am writing because a growing milk supply benefits every dairy farmer in this state, and because Minnesota's environmental regulations are comprehensive, robust, and fully capable of protecting the environment without the need for an Environmental Impact Statement.

The economics of our industry are straightforward: when milk supply grows, processors invest. When processors invest, every dairy farmer — regardless of size — has a stronger, more reliable market for their milk. We are seeing significant growth in dairy processing capacity across the Upper Midwest and throughout the country right now, and a growing milk supply is needed to support those investments. The U.S. dairy industry has a great opportunity in front of it to grow. Minnesota should be leading that opportunity, not creating barriers to it.

I know from personal experience what it means to have a strong dairy industry behind you. When Skyview Dairy wanted to increase the size of our herd in 2008, the dairy community came to our support and spoke on behalf of the industry's positive financial impact on communities and the counties where we operate. A growing milk supply allows us to maintain the economic ecosystem that makes dairy viable for all of us.

Calls for an Environmental Impact Statement: they are not warranted by the facts or by the law. Minnesota already has one of the most robust environmental review and permitting systems for livestock facilities of any state in the country. This project has undergone lengthy and rigorous analysis through the EAW process. And the expansion will operate under an Individual NPDES Feedlot Permit — more stringent and site-specific than the general permits most Minnesota feedlots operate under — requiring zero discharge of pollutants to waters of the state. Coupled with the DNR's protective groundwater permits, the environment will be protected.

Furthermore, the individual permit set to be in place here was developed after a collaborative process with the MPCA to develop enhanced permit requirements. That kind of good-faith engagement with regulators should be encouraged, not punished by an unnecessary EIS that would only delay a well-reviewed project.

I believe a strong, growing dairy industry is good for every farmer in this state. The West River Dairy expansion supports that. It creates jobs, provides a market for locally grown crops, and supplies locally produced fertilizer (manure) to.

I respectfully urge the MPCA to follow the facts and the science. The EAW is thorough and complete. The environmental protections are robust and enforceable. No EIS is needed. Please allow this project to move forward without further delay so that Minnesota's dairy industry can

continue to grow — for our communities and for the next generation of farm families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this comment.

Garrett Luthens Skyview Dairy