

Dear Director Bellon:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed CAFO permit. In the dairy industry for over 40 years, I have actively protected the environment. I was one of the first to plant trees along the creek that borders my land I have been actively involved in research work over the years, including allowing your department to conduct research on my land to look at manure applications and how they relate to nitrate leaching. I have been actively involved in serving our community, which has included my most recent role as a part time employee at USDA. Over 35 years ago I was one of the first to put in a manure lagoon, at a time when lagoons were hailed by all as one of the best inventions to protect our environment, allowing dairy farms to spread their manure at times when crops could best absorb the nutrients, rather than all winter long as was the case back then. As you can see, I am no stranger to promoting and implementing best management practices.

Perhaps this is why I am so disturbed by this draft permit. In my past experiences I have always been willing, as have many of my fellow dairymen, to embrace best management practices based in sound science. The Dairy Nutrient Management Plan that I follow, and the advice I get from the professionals at the Whatcom Conservation District, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and my local private agronomy and environmental consultants are always looking at updating and improving my BMP's based on current science. We have tested these theories by checking for elevated levels of nitrates and fecal coliform in the soil and water around my farm and the lagoon. We use this data to refine and improve our practices and reduce our footprint on the environment.

Now Ecology, comes with dramatic new regulations that would drastically change the way we farm. Are these regulations based on any science? All the evidence I see would lead me to believe the answer to this is **no**. When DOE staff has asked if they have evidence that all lagoons are leaking they say **no**. When asked if they have evidence that much larger buffers than we currently have will improve the environment they say **no**. Will having to comply with SEPA and have a public hearing for virtually anything I do to the infrastructure on my farm improve our environment? **No**.

I can provide you with some sound data from my own farm that I hope you will be listen to.
Have I seen any evidence that my lagoon is discharging? No
Will 35-100' buffers be more protective of the environment on my farm? No
Would these new regulations cripple my business financially? Yes
Would I consider getting out of farming if this permit goes through? Absolutely yes!

I know you have heard from our leaders that a significant number of dairies would quit farming if these regulations are enacted. You can count me as one of those. I'm in my 60s now and even though I have two sons interested in farming, I cannot imagine why I would want them to farm here if regulations are enacted. I say this sadly, as I'm a lifelong Whatcom County resident with deep roots here. May I respectfully ask you to reconsider a regulation such as this that is just too much.

Respectfully,
Larry DeHaan

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