

Dane Co. Exec. Parisi: Dane County to explore construction of more digesters, manure treatment systems in Mendota watershed

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Today Dane County Executive Parisi announced Dane County will be partnering with our family farmers to accelerate lakes clean-up efforts by commissioning a study to recommend where treatment technology can most effectively be located to treat more manure. The county is looking for proposals and bids from private partners to evaluate where additional digesters or other types of large scale treatment systems could be placed to reduce run-off.

The announcement comes a week after the county broke ground on a project that's the first of its kind in the country to sell biogas for environmental energy credits, making it possible for manure digesters to generate more income while reducing manure spreading.

"The advance of technology offers the boldest opportunity we've had to date to better clean up our lakes," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "Treatment is the most effective answer to better managing the otherwise harmful environmental effects of excessive nutrient runoff into our lakes. Soon we'll have an ability to inject that biogas straight into a natural gas pipeline, making digesters more economically feasible while reducing run-off and confronting climate change."

There are currently two privately owned digesters in northern Dane County that were a result of partnerships involving the county. The new feasibility study just now underway will explore whether additional farms could team together to have their manure processed into biogas and treated.

“A seamless network of digesters throughout northern Dane County will reduce phosphorus loading and runoff, better ensuring the stability of both our dairy industry and our natural resources,” Parisi said. Parisi also noted construction is now underway on a manure treatment system at one of the county’s two biogesters (Town of Springfield) that will remove nearly 100% of the phosphorus from manure. UW-Scientists estimate that 40 percent of manure containing phosphorus runs off snow or frozen ground between January and March and ends up in the lakes.

“Our farmers are our best partners when it comes to lakes clean-up efforts,” Parisi said. “The county is working to do our part to ensure we preserve our agriculture heritage while protecting one of our most valuable resources.”

Proposals are due to Dane County May 24th and pending County Board review and approval, a contract for the study will be awarded this summer.