

Wisconsin Dairy Alliance, Venture Dairy Cooperative: Ensure the voice of dairy is heard on a proposed DNR rule that could cost CAFOs over \$2 million

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On Wednesday, the Wisconsin Dairy Alliance and Venture Dairy Cooperative joined other industry leaders in submitting comments to the Department of Natural Resources on the Department's Economic Impact Analysis on its proposed Water Quality "Antidegradation" rule.

WDA and VDC partnered with the following groups to submit comments:

- Wisconsin Paper Council;
- Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce; and
- Midwest Food Products Association

"Despite DNR's claim that this rule would not have a financial impact on CAFOs, we find that is not the case. We estimated that this new rule could potentially cost \$2.12 million in compliance costs for CAFOs over two years," said Cindy Leitner, President of Wisconsin Dairy Alliance.

The proposed rule allows the DNR to require certain CAFOs (those seeking to do a surface water alternative discharge limit) to do a detailed alternatives analysis, including at least one "practicable alternative." There would be costs associated with conducting this analysis. Likewise, the proposed rule allows the DNR to require certain CAFOs seeking to do a surface water alternative discharge limit to do a

social importance analysis or economic importance analysis. The criteria proposed by the DNR to demonstrate a project of “social importance” or “economic importance” are very vague and open to staff interpretation. Thus, there could be substantial costs to prepare this analysis. Finally, the proposed rule allows the DNR to require a CAFO that completes an alternatives analysis to choose a “practicable alternative.” This may result in CAFOs being unable to get approval for a surface water alternative discharge limit. If such a request is denied, a CAFO would face additional operating costs (such as additional manure storage and hauling costs).

“We will continue to closely monitor this rule as it moves through the rulemaking process. We have learned that agencies intentionally underestimate these economic analyses to avoid additional legislative oversight. We have to keep a watchful eye, especially when we are told our industry specifically will not be impacted,” said Kim Bremmer, Executive Director of Venture Dairy Cooperative.

The rule still faces a lengthy process in the agency and the legislature, and WDA and VDC will continue to provide updates and will continue to participate in the rulemaking process.

[See the Full Comments of the Coalition Here](#)