



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

1250 W. Alder Street • Union Gap, WA 98903-0009 • (509) 575-2490
711 for Washington Relay Service • Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341

April 5, 2021

Jean Mendoza
Friends of Toppenish Creek
3142 Signal Peak Road
White Swan, WA 98952

RE: Letters received by Ecology regarding Riverview Dairy

Dear Jean Mendoza:

I am writing on behalf of Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) in response to three letters you sent on March 12, 2021, to Director, Laura Watson; Air Quality Program Manager, Kathy Taylor; and Water Quality Program Manager, Vince McGowan, regarding Riverview Dairy.

Thank you for sharing your concerns, and the concerns of those who signed the petition included with the letters, about air and water pollution in Mabton. Ecology takes complaints like this seriously, and works closely with our partners with jurisdiction to assure we respond as quickly as possible.

In this case, we have communicated with the Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency and the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

In the petition attached to your letter, you and the residents of Vance Road requested a hotline for reporting manure spills. We hope you will share with them that Ecology accepts reports on environmental issues by web form, email, or by phone at each of our regional offices, and at our headquarters in Lacey. In Yakima County, environmental reports can be made by calling 509-575-2490, or by email at croerts@ecy.wa.gov. Contacts for other regions and information about reporting an environmental concern are available on our website at

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<https://ecology.wa.gov/ReportAnIssue>. Emergency oil or hazardous spills can be reported by calling 1-800-OILS-911 (Washington Emergency Management Division, 24/7).

Specifically, related to your recent letter, we have taken the following steps in response:

Air Quality

Our Air Quality Program Manager, Kathy Taylor, shared your concerns with Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency Director, Keith Hurley, on March 22, 2021, as you requested.

Water Quality

We have formally entered the water quality concerns about the Riverview Ranch waste storage pond into our Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS). That information has been referred to WSDA, which will open an investigation and review the condition of the pond. If the inspection indicates the pond is discharging, the inspector with WSDA is required to report the discharge to us. Ecology's Water Quality Program will evaluate any violations; consider corrective notices and enforcement, and the need for a water quality permit coverage for the dairy.

Under state law, Washington dairies are required to have manure management plans to prevent pollution when they are fully implemented. Dairies found to be violating the State's water quality standards for surface or groundwater pollution, must take steps to change their operations, and may be required to come under permit (CAFO) to prevent surface and groundwater pollution.

In water quality investigations, enforcement action is based on evidence verified and gathered by water quality inspectors and professionals under quality assurance protocols. Therefore, we cannot train or rely on independent sampling or monitoring by residents as you suggest in your letters to us. The best approach is to document what you observe with location and time stamps, and make a report through the resources mentioned above.

In closing, I want to reiterate how important it is to immediately report suspected environmental releases or violations. This allows us to respond and coordinate with agencies of jurisdiction.

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when appropriate, as quickly as possible. Thank you and the Friends of Toppenish Creek for your ongoing commitment to the community.

Sincerely,



Sage Park
Regional Director
Central Regional Office
509-480-1753

cc: Chery Sullivan, WSDA, Dairy Nutrient Management Program Manager
Keith Hurley, Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency Director
Laura Watson, Director of WA State Department of Ecology
Kathy Taylor, Air Quality Program Manager
Millie Piazza, Environmental Justice & Title VI Senior Advisor
Vince McGowan, P.E., Water Quality Program Manager

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