

I am a concerned citizen in the Town of Lind and/or Waupaca County and I am writing about an anaerobic co-digester proposal in the Town of Lind. Vanguard Renewables is proposing to build and operate two anaerobic co-digesters on the Brooks Farms, a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation in our township.

This proposal would use approximately 225 tons/day of offsite waste with the majority of this waste “sourced from multiple industrial food processing and food manufacturing facilities” combining this mixed waste with 110 ton/day of manure from the CAFO. The by-product of these digesters, the liquid and solid, are considered by the WI DNR as industrial wastewater and industrial waste slurry, even after going through an ultrafiltration system. The proposal calls for using these by-products as “fertilizer” on the land and for irrigation of farm crops.

My concerns are many – but here are the highlights:

-
- Research has shown the presence of heavy metals and antibiotic resistant genes/bacteria and other pathogens remain in digestate. Allowing this spreading of the digestate is of great concern for public health and safety as plants were shown to uptake heavy metals and introduce them into our human food supply.
 - Significant federal government subsidies have spurred a proliferation of these digesters in the state. State regulatory agencies are rushing to keep up with the proposals — familiarizing themselves with the technology, while developing a regulatory framework that protects public health and safety.
 - Concentrated nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) in the digestate will further pollute our waters when applied to soils, which may be already over-saturated with nutrients per University of Wisconsin’s recommendations.
 - A proposed average recurring discharge of 41,000 gallons of industrial wastewater from the co-digester into an unnamed tributary leading to Walla Walla Creek, a class 2 Trout Stream. This industrial wastewater will be a new point source of pollution into the Fox/Wolf Rivers Watershed which is already impaired and has a TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) for phosphorus.
 - A Waddable Stream evaluation states that the observed groundwater influx and water temperature measured on 6/15/2023, indicates the potential to support a Cold Transitional Headwater natural community in the unnamed tributary that will receive the industrial wastewater discharge. Industrial wastewater coming from the digester which could be as high as 104 degrees. Total Nitrogen levels (primarily Nitrate+Nitrates as N) were high in the Walla Walla Creek, relative to the concentration found in unimpacted surface water.

Since Wisconsin is delegated by the EPA to administer the Clean Water Act, issuing a permit is a Federal Action under the Environmental Policy Act.

I am demanding that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed for this proposal prior to any permits being issued because the proposal calls for:

1. Industrial wastewater discharge into an unnamed tributary that drains into a Class 2 trout Stream (Walla Walla Creek).
2. There is a potential hazard to the groundwater and wells from the digester (by-product of digester) and violation of the Public Trust Doctrine in the Wisconsin Constitution.
3. This is considered a new point source of pollution in the Fox/Wolf Rivers watershed that was declared impaired by the EPA in 2020 and has a TMDL in place.

Respectfully,

Please contact the following State and Federal Agencies:

Governor Evers: 608-266-1212	govinfo@wisconsin.gov
DNR Secretary: 888-936-7463	DNRWellReport@wisconsin.gov
Natural Resource Board: 608-267-7420	dnrnrbliason@wisconsin.gov
EPA Region 5 (Chicago): 800-621-8431	r5hotline@epa.gov