

NO 1 - REQUEST FOR REVIEW: EO 25-04 / Westcoast Holsteins Ltd. And
Ron Kooyman

Filed By: Lee Gogal and Ron Kooyman

Deadline for RFRs: August 18, 2025

Date RFR received: August 12, 2025

Status of Party as per Decision Summary: Operator

Request for Board Review – Enforcement Order #EO25-04

To:

Laura Friend, Manager, Board Reviews
Natural Resources Conservation Board
Email: laura.friend@nrcb.ca

From:

Lee Gogal & Ron Kooyman
Westcoast Holsteins Ltd.
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Date: August 11, 2025

Subject: Request for Board Review – Enforcement Order #EO25-04

a) Statement of Facts

Westcoast Holsteins Ltd. operates a dairy confined feeding operation at NW 35-042-25 W4M in Ponoka County, Alberta, which includes a pre-2002 two-stage earthen liquid manure storage (EMS) monitored under NRCB Approval RA05006. Based on a compliance directive in December 2023, we originally agreed to reline the manure pits to address NRCB concerns regarding potential elevated manure constituents. The potential risks were based largely on limited testing results over the past 10 years, which were affected by the existing shallow monitoring wells running dry. Upon seeking quotes and timelines, it became evident that relining the pits would be extremely cost-prohibitive and impose severe financial stress, particularly given that the order's basis relies on limited and inconsistent monitoring data caused by inadequate well depth.

b) Grounds for the Request

As confirmed by our hydrologist, many shallow wells in the area have been running dry due to lower groundwater levels. This means current monitoring wells cannot provide consistent or reliable data to confirm whether elevated manure constituents are present, or whether the EMS is in fact creating any risk to groundwater or soil. The enforcement order's requirement to reline or decommission the EMS is therefore based on potentially outdated or unrepresentative data. As outlined in the attached recommendation from Envirowest Engineering, installing deeper monitoring wells into the wet sandstone would allow for accurate, year-round groundwater sampling and provide a sound scientific basis for any future remedial work.

c) Harm Resulting from the Enforcement Order

If the order remains in place without amendment, we will be compelled to proceed with a million-dollar liner installation or full decommissioning before we can obtain reliable data from new monitoring wells. This creates a risk of incurring significant and potentially unnecessary costs for remediation that may not be required, resulting in undue financial hardship for the company and threatening the continued viability of the operation. Additionally, without time to complete new well installation and monitoring, we cannot demonstrate compliance through more accurate groundwater data.

d) Remedy Sought

We request that the Board amend Enforcement Order #EO25-04 to allow Westcoast Holsteins Ltd. to:

1. Install new, deeper monitoring wells into the wet sandstone aquifer to obtain consistent, representative groundwater quality data by April 30, 2026;
2. Suspend the requirement to reline or decommission the EMS until the results of at least one year of monitoring from these new wells are available; and
3. If new test results show nitrate or manure constituent levels above acceptable thresholds, proceed with relining the EMS in accordance with NRCB requirements.

e) Contact Information

Names: Lee Gogal & Ron Kooyman

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Request for Suspension of Order Pending Review

We also request that the Board suspend the operation of Enforcement Order #EO25-04 until the completion of this review, to allow the installation and initial sampling from new monitoring wells. This suspension is necessary to prevent irreversible financial harm from prematurely undertaking the costly EMS relining before obtaining definitive groundwater data.

Appendix A – Supporting Technical and Regulatory References

1. Basis of Enforcement Order Relies on Limited and Inconsistent Data

EO25-04 notes that groundwater samples were only obtained in 2020, 2021, and 2022 due to the monitoring wells often being dry. The order cites “elevated chloride and nitrate-N” as indicators of manure constituents, but these results come from a very small number of data points over more than a decade of monitoring, and all from shallow wells that terminate at approximately 5.2–5.8 m below ground level in dry sandstone. Per our hydrologist’s assessment, shallow wells in the area, including the NRCB monitoring wells, regularly run dry due to lower groundwater levels, meaning they cannot provide consistent or representative data.

2. Potential for More Accurate Data from Deeper Wells

The NRCB’s own file review (Appendix D, RA05006 File Review) states that at least three nearby domestic or stock wells completed into wet sandstone (approx. 27–30 m below ground) consistently produce water. Well records show stable static water levels and adequate yields when drilled into the wet sandstone zone. Installing new monitoring wells to this depth will:

- Provide a continuous water source for annual sampling.
- Eliminate the issue of seasonal or persistent dryness.
- Allow a definitive assessment of whether the EMS is contributing contaminants.

3. Cost and Feasibility Concerns with Immediate EMS Relining

EO25-04 mandates EMS relining or decommissioning by November 15, 2025, without allowing time to install new wells or confirm actual groundwater impacts. The cost to reline the EMS could jeopardize ongoing operations. If deeper well data shows no exceedance of regulated thresholds, these costs could be avoided.

4. Alternative Compliance Path Consistent with AOPA Objectives

AOPA Section 39 allows enforcement measures where an environmental risk is present. The Standards and Administration Regulation (SAR) s.18 gives approval officers discretion to require leak detection systems “of a type appropriate to determine whether there are leaks.” Installing deeper wells is a leak detection system that is appropriate to the site’s geology and hydrogeology, and would meet SAR intent while avoiding premature, possibly unwarranted capital work. This approach also aligns with EO25-04’s stated environmental protection purpose by ensuring accurate risk assessment before irreversible remediation.

5. Requested Amendment to EO25-04

Amendment would state that Westcoast Holsteins Ltd.:

1. May install deeper monitoring wells into the wet sandstone by April 30, 2026.
2. Shall collect and submit at least 12 months of water quality data from the new wells.
3. Shall proceed with EMS relining only if new data confirms nitrate-N or chloride levels exceeding AOPA thresholds.

July 17, 2025

Westcoast Holsteins Ltd.
c/o Ron Kooyman

Delivered via email: ronkinbc@hotmail.com

**Re: Groundwater Monitoring
Application RA24019
NW¼-35-042-25-W4M
Ponoka County, Alberta**

Envirowest Engineering (Envirowest) was retained by yourself to provide guidance regarding groundwater monitoring at the above location for a current manure storage lagoon operated by Westcoast Holsteins Ltd.. The current manure storage lagoon is associated with a 724 head dairy operation located at NW-35-42-25 W4M.

The current lagoon is a two stage, unlined earthen lagoon. A former permit (RA04025) states the following:

Each cell of the existing two stage liquid manure storage is 350 feet long, 150 feet wide, and 20 feet deep with interior side slopes of 3:1 (horizontal to vertical). Using a freeboard depth of 1.7 feet (0.5 metres), the volume of each cell would be 461,000 cubic feet (13,055 cubic metres). Total storage available at this site would be 26,110 cubic metres.

Previous monitoring wells were installed into groundwater to provide leak detection monitoring. In, subsequent years groundwater elevations have declined in the area, rendering the monitoring wells inadequate for the purpose of groundwater monitoring. The monitoring wells at the time were completed atop bedrock in which a solid stem drill rig met refusal.

Without further assessment of the bedrock, it can be considered a potential migration pathway. Soils directly surrounding un-engineering manure storage lagoons are conservatively considered to be under saturated conditions. Should monitoring wells be advanced deeper (into the shallow bedrock), to monitor groundwater, conservative measures can be taken to ensure the protection of deeper resources. The following should be considered:

1. Advancement of the borehole should be completed in such a way to ensure that surface contamination (manure), does not impact the bedrock (ie. Does not migrate through mechanical means)
2. Installation of the monitoring well should be sealed above the screened portion and slightly into bedrock with a medium such as grout or an appropriately hydrated bentonite clay as to provide an immediate seal
3. Should a differing soil structure be encountered beneath the initial shallow bedrock the monitoring well should only be completed within the water bearing zone, sealing off all other soil structures as outlined above, and if found applicable, the bottom of the borehole should also be sealed
4. If at any point the monitoring wells are no longer deemed necessary or are damaged, special care to appropriate decommissioning is required

Envirowest Engineering is pleased to submit this recommendation to Ron Kooyman of Westcoast Holsteins Ltd. The information and conclusions contained in this letter are for their sole use. No other party is to rely upon the information contained within the report without the express written authorization of Envirowest Engineering.

We trust that this report meets your present needs. Please feel free to contact the undersigned with any questions or should you require additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily J. Low, P.Eng.
Envirowest Engineering
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