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# Do you have a permit for those cows?

Walz seeks to saddle farmers with new greenhouse gas permitting requirements



## CONCERNED MINNESOTANS SHOULD:

- **Urge their elected officials to pass legislation protecting Minnesota farmers from greenhouse gas regulations.**
- **Contact the Environmental Quality Board to tell them you oppose these new regulations.**

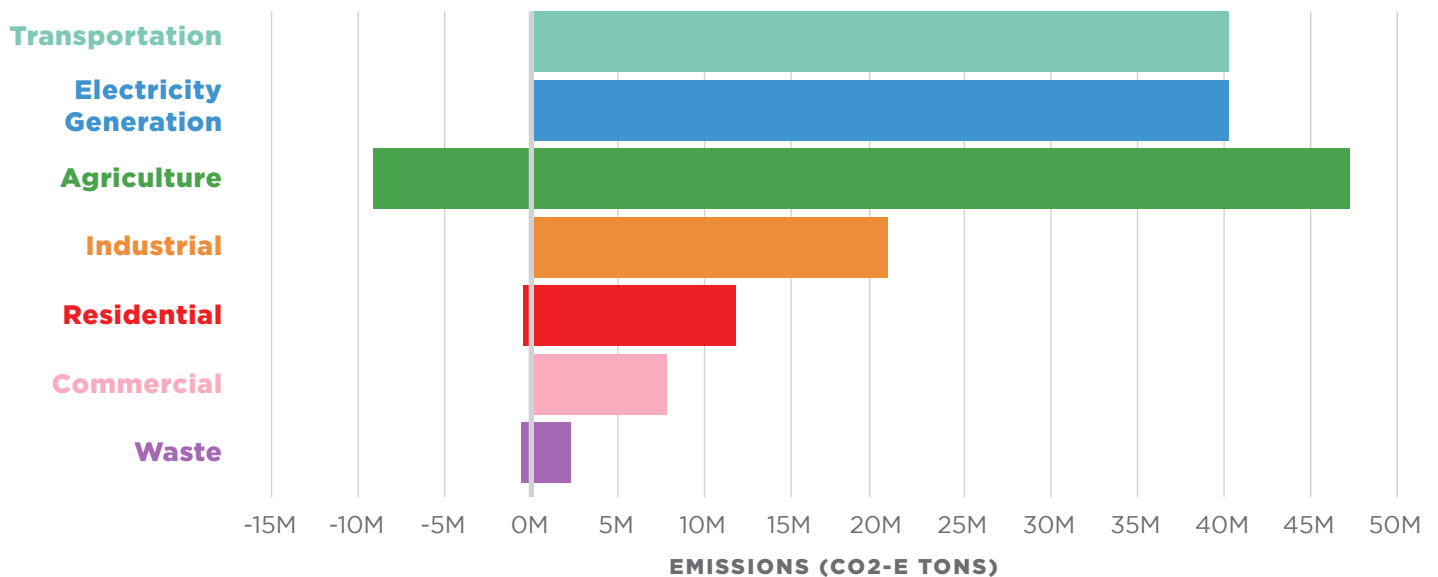
## Freeing farmers from “Green New Permitting” rules

After “farting cows” were identified as a climate risk to the planet in a document about the Green New Deal released by the office of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, many people in Minnesota were quick to dismiss the idea that the state of Minnesota could begin to regulate farms based on their greenhouse gas emissions.

However, the Walz administration has instructed bureaucrats in St. Paul to make sweeping changes to the permitting process that could make life more difficult for some Minnesota farmers who want to expand their operations.

If these “Green New” regulations are enacted, they will force some farmers to quantify the po-

FIGURE 1  
**2018 SECTOR SOURCES OF GHG EMISSIONS AND STORAGE**



tential greenhouse gas emissions for new projects. The rules could even require farmers to find ways to reduce emissions as part of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), if they are required to complete these assessments.

These “Green New Permitting” rules would increase costs by more than \$12,000 and delay projects but deliver zero measurable environmental benefits. They would be all pain and no gain.

The Walz administration is seeking to enact

these new regulations because they want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency MPCA, agriculture is the second-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state.

Rather than appreciating the vital role Minnesota’s farmers play putting food on our tables and feeding the world, bureaucrats in St. Paul seem to think our farmers are a problem to be solved. Unsurprisingly, they want to force farmers to jump through more hoops to conduct their business.

## Do you have a permit for those cows?

Proponents of these Green New Permitting rules argue that the greenhouse gas quantifications are only for informational purposes. However, in a December 2020 meeting, former MPCA Commissioner Laura Bishop implied that the data collected by these new requirements could one day be used to approve or deny new projects if new laws or regulations are enacted.

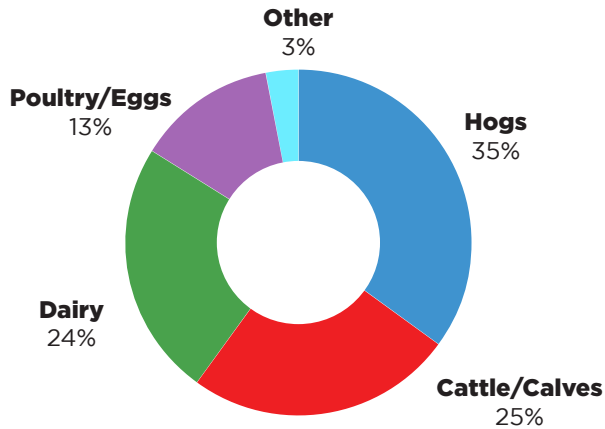
This means the regulations are meant to start out small and gradually expand over time. Eventually, the rules could hold projects hostage indefinitely, increasing their costs and making them take longer.

### Daley Farms

Some Minnesota farmers have already seen a version of their bleak Green New Future. The Daley family of Southeastern Minnesota was seeking to expand their dairy farm when radical environmental groups sued the MPCA for not assessing the greenhouse gases associated with the farm expansion.

Unfortunately, a judge sided with these activists, and the MPCA now inventories greenhouse gas emissions when it permits livestock operations that require an environmental review. This has resulted in regulatory delays for the Daley family and legal fees.

## Minnesota Livestock Production



**388,134**

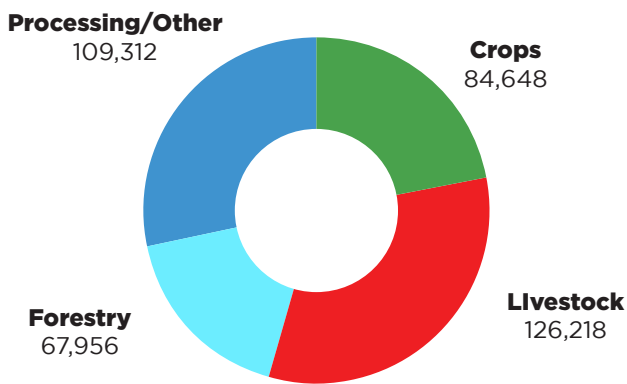
**Minnesota Jobs Supported by  
Agriculture and Forestry**

**13% OF ALL MN JOBS**

**\$16.7 billion**

**Minnesota Agricultural Production  
#5 IN TOTAL AGRICULTURAL  
PRODUCTION**

## Minnesota Total Ag & Forestry Jobs



Legislation in the works seeks to move Minnesota's total, economywide greenhouse gas emissions dial to zero across all sectors — transportation and agriculture, too, not just electricity generation — by 2050. The measure would also add a new requirement that government actions such as permitting or funding decisions be consistent with those targets.

**—Minneapolis Star Tribune**

## Arbitrary regulations

The biggest problem with adding greenhouse gases to environmental permitting is that greenhouse gas emissions mix evenly in the atmosphere. This means they are a global phenomenon, and an increase in emissions from a farm in Minnesota will be tiny compared to emissions in China.

As a result, the ultimate decision as to whether a given project is “worth the additional emissions” will be a highly subjective one.

For example, would a new sports stadium

potentially be denied due to its carbon footprint? Because many people in the general public enjoy professional sports, it is highly unlikely that a politician would deny a permit for a new stadium based on its potential greenhouse gas emissions. For more contentious projects, though, regulators may decide the emissions are too high.

Unfortunately, this new regulatory power could put the fate of projects in the hands of regulators who may not appreciate how important agriculture is to Minnesota's economy and way of life.

## The economic impact of agriculture in Minnesota

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, farming is one of the largest sectors of Minnesota's economy, generating nearly \$17 billion in 2019. Agriculture supports more than 388,000

jobs, which was almost 13 percent of the state's pre-pandemic workforce.

The state's agricultural sector also helps feed the world, exporting soybeans, pork, and corn to

other countries to meet their demand for food. By potentially limiting farming operations in Minnesota due to their greenhouse gas emissions, bureaucrats would be reducing Minnesota's contribution to the

global food supply, which could incentivize farmers in other states to add more cows to their operations or plant more acreage to crops to fill in the gaps.

## No Measurable Environmental Benefits

These are high prices to pay for no measurable environmental impacts. In fact, completely eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from Minnesota (achieving net zero) would have zero measurable impact on future global temperatures.

Using the same logic used by the Obama administration in developing the Clean Power Plan, which was widely considered to be the administration's most sweeping climate change initiative, Center of the American Experiment has estimated the temperature impact of a net-zero Minnesota.

Minnesota emitted 161 million tons or 146 million metric tons of greenhouse gases in 2018. Eliminating these emissions would yield a future temperature reduction of 0.003 degrees C by 2100, which is far too small to measure with even the most sophisticated scientific equipment.

If eliminating all greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota will have zero measurable impact on climate trends, then there is zero credible basis for the Walz administration to force farmers to spend tens of thousands of dollars quantifying greenhouse gas emissions from their operations.

## Make Minnesota farmers free to farm

Minnesota farmers have enough to worry about with the weather and fluctuations in commodity prices. They do not need more regulatory red tape in the form of these new regulations.

Unfortunately, these regulations are being crafted by unelected bureaucrats on the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) with no legislative oversight. This means a small handful of people are making decisions that will affect farmers throughout the entire state.

State legislators should protect Minnesota farmers from this sort of regulatory overreach by introducing and passing legislation that would prevent greenhouse gas regulations on Minnesota's agriculture industry.

You can play a crucial role in stopping these new regulations by contacting the EQB and telling them you oppose new rules to force farmers to quantify greenhouse gas emissions.

## Conclusions

Instead of appreciating the important role that Minnesota's farmers play in feeding the world, bureaucrats in St. Paul seem to think our farmers are a problem to be solved. Unfortunately, their

so-called solutions will saddle our food producers with expensive red tape for no measurable environmental benefits.

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