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April 21, 2026

Tina Hultman
WM Timberline Trail Landfill
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FID 855040230
Rusk County
SW / Correspondence

Subject: Completeness Determination for the Feasibility Report for the Timberline Trail Recycling and Disposal Facility (TTRDF) Proposed Northern Expansion No. 2

Dear Ms. Hultman:

The Department of Natural Resources (department) has reviewed for completeness the report entitled "Timberline Trail Recycling & Disposal Facility Feasibility Report Proposed Northern Expansion No. 2" dated August 19, 2025, submitted by Tetra Tech on behalf of Waste Management of Wisconsin, Inc. (WMWI). The department received the report on August 20, 2025.

The department has also reviewed the report titled, "Feasibility Report Addendum No. 1 – Proposed Northern Expansion No. 2" dated January 7, 2026, and received on the same date, along with additional information received via emails on January 30, February 16 and February 20, 2026.

Based on our review, we have determined that the feasibility report is complete. This is not an approval of the proposed landfill but does confirm that the minimum information required by chapter NR 512, Wis. Adm. Code, and s. 289.24(3), Wis. Stats., has been provided.

The department will publish the enclosed public notice on its website at http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Waste/Comment.html and in the *Wisconsin State Journal* and in the *Ladysmith News* to invite public comments for a period of 30 days on the content and completeness of the feasibility report. The public comment period will begin when the public notice is posted on the department's website. The department will post electronic copies of the feasibility report, addenda and associated documents on its website. The department will also post this letter and the enclosed project summary and environmental analysis, on its website during the public comment period.

A solid waste feasibility determination is an integrated analysis action under s. NR 150.20(2)(a)7, Wis. Adm. Code. Therefore, the environmental analysis is integrated into the project summary and a separate environmental analysis has not been completed.

Upon receipt of this completeness determination, s. 289.24(4) and s. 289.32, Wis. Stats., requires that the applicant immediately distribute printed copies of the feasibility report, addenda and any additional information submitted as part of the feasibility report to the clerk of each affected municipality and the main public library in each affected municipality. On August 25, 2025, and on January 12, 2026, the department received via email a letter from Tetra Tech on behalf of WMWI, along with proof of delivery of the initial site report, feasibility report and addendum 1 to the Bruce Area Library, Town of Stubbs and Rusk County.

As the department continues its review of the feasibility report or if the department receives comments or questions during the public comment period, the department may request additional information to make a feasibility determination.

A. At this time, the department is requesting the following additional information:

1. Soil Volume. Please provide an update since the 2025 liner construction of the remaining clay volume available from the Czekalski Clay Borrow to be able to construct the first phase of liner including the remaining area of Phase 9A, modified Phase 9B and Phase 10A, as well as final cover increment C and the first phase of final cover for the expansion, Increment D, for those cover options that include clay.
2. Consolidation Testing. The department has reviewed the memo dated February 20, 2026, regarding the consolidation testing and settlement analysis. The memo presents a table of those soil samples attempted to be collected for consolidation testing at those soil borings that were part of the 2024 geotechnical investigation. However, the data previously collected from soil borings MW-102, B-120 and B-122, which are part of the alternative geotechnical investigation for the Northern Expansion No. 2, were not included in the discussion or table. Please provide a discussion of the data collected from MW-102, B-120 and B-122 that would be indicative of a low risk of settlement in this area.

   The geological information recorded at MW-102 indicates a till with a USCS class of CL-ML at a depth of approximately 40 feet below the proposed subbase grade as shown in the cross section C-C' on plan sheet 7 and cross-section J-J' on plan sheet 14, each of which shows this formation to be laterally extensive with nearby soil borings B-120 and B-122. The area of MW-102 would have the greatest potential for consolidation given the proposed overall height of waste grades and thickness

of waste at this location; however, this area has limited field and laboratory consolidation testing data available.

If soil samples cannot be collected for consolidation testing, please discuss other methods that may provide comparable information such as standard penetration tests and pocket penetrometer tests. The department is evaluating whether the current available information is sufficient to assess potential for settlement, as well what alternative data to consolidation testing may provide relevant information to close any gaps in that assessment. Without sufficient information, the department will consider conditions of feasibility that may limit the leachate line length and/or require additional soil testing.

3. Needs and Site Life Review. Based on the historical tonnage since the previously approved expansion circa 2001 and accounting for either the waste acceptance growth rate or the population growth rate during this time, the department finds that the information presented in the feasibility report is not substantiated with the available record and information regarding needs and site-life for the proposed expansion.

   a. The department notes the following, below, regarding the service area identified in the feasibility report and the need for the proposed expansion. Please provide information and documentation to support the depicted service area for the proposed expansion or a modified service area, based on actual records or documentation. For example, please include documentation to support the TTRDF expanded service area to include the seventeen Minnesota counties, including those seven counties listed as part of the Twin Cities Metro Area (TCMA), coupled with documentation to support the projected annual increase of tonnage derived from out of state waste such as from Minnesota that would go to TTRDF, which historically (in the last ten years or more) has been less than 1% of the total annual waste accepted at the existing TTRDF.

      - The feasibility report indicates the proposed expansion would begin to accept waste in 2030. However, Table 11-4 indicates that the waste disposal capacity for the proposed landfill's service area would be depleted in 2027 prior to the anticipated start date of the proposed expansion. The discrepancy between these dates would appear to suggest that the service area depicted in the feasibility report exaggerates the TTRDF's true service area. In other words, it appears that the waste volumes generated in a large part of the depicted service area would likely never make its way to the TTRDF because of distance, and other landfills within closer proximity to the more distant areas of the depicted service area would actually address the needs of the distant portion. Therefore, the stated need for that large of a service area and the proposed expansion may not be representative of the actual service area needs and associated waste volumes that would go to the TTRDF.

- The 2024 report by Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) titled Minnesota Solid Waste Management Policy Plan mentions out of state waste that has historically gone to two other Wisconsin landfills but does not mention the TTRDF. While true that closure of the waste to energy facility or another landfill in TCMA could mean that volume of waste would need to go to another facility or landfill, the supporting information provided in the feasibility report does not give justification for that amount of waste to go to the TTRDF given the fact that the TTRDF is greater than 100 miles away from where TCMA waste is generated and that MPCA would likely evaluate the needs of those landfills serving the TCMA service area, which doesn't appear to include the TTRDF.

b. The department notes the following regarding the estimated site-life provided in the feasibility report for a proposed 6.5 million cubic yard expansion. Based on the current information, the department believes the proposed expansion would have a site-life longer than 15 years. Please provide additional supporting documentation to show that the growth rate used is sustainable or provide an adjusted growth rate that is more consistent with historical data, the population and per capita waste generation rate, and a service area that is supported by actual records or documentation.

- The feasibility report uses the last 3 years of waste tonnages accepted at the landfill to calculate an annual compound growth rate of approximately 16% (15% + 0.90%). However, the actual annual gate acceptance tonnages fluctuate from year to year. While there may be a long-term increasing trend, the historical data from the TTRDF and almost all other landfills do not support a sustainable rate of compounded growth used in the feasibility report. Furthermore, the service area appears to be exaggerated with unsupported or unsubstantiated estimates of out-of-state waste that would be received at the landfill.

4. <u>Nitrate + nitrite (as nitrogen) in Groundwater.</u> Please provide a further evaluation of the source of the nitrate levels at the groundwater monitoring wells MW-204, MW-205 and MW-206, and identify actions that could be taken to reduce the nitrate impacts at these wells. Exceedances of the enforcement standard for nitrate + nitrite (as nitrogen) have occurred in at least 8 sample rounds between April 2024 and April 2025 at wells MW204, MW205 and MW206. The source of nitrates from agricultural practices would appear to be occurring on land owned by WMWI. Additionally, the nitrate concentrations appear to have variability that may be attributed or exacerbated by other activities. For example, MW-205 has fluctuating nitrate exceedances in the last 8 sample rounds and MW-205 is located near a stormwater retention pond (identified as

artificial wetland W-3 as discussed in section 8 of the feasibility report).

Please be advised that wells MW-209 and MW-210 are greater than 300 feet of the proposed landfill, and thus, the department may use discretion in considering whether an exemption is warranted for groundwater quality exceedances for certain substances at these wells.

B. The department has the following comments:

1. Stormwater. The Waste & Materials Management Program is conferring with the Stormwater Program. Please continue to work with the Stormwater Program to address their concerns regarding the existing stormwater management system. If a favorable feasibility determination is made for the proposed expansion, the department may include conditions as needed for the plan of operation report to incorporate the necessary design changes to the stormwater management system.

   The feasibility report states that the North Sedimentation Basin, North Treatment Basin, South Sedimentation Basin, and South Treatment Basin can currently handle runoff from the existing landfill but would be evaluated as part of the plan of operation for the proposed expansion. Currently, these basins appear to rely on treatment with the use of polymers. The proposed expansion proposes an additional 12.8 acres of drainage area going to the north sedimentation and 18.9 acres to the south basin. The following statements made in the feasibility report suggest changes to the existing stormwater management are necessary:

   - Section 8.10.5 of the feasibility report indicates that temporary surface water holding basins may be constructed within the landfill's footprint as needed for additional storage or to handle construction water.
   - Section 9.0 of the feasibility report states that additional stormwater management capacity may be required as part of the proposed Northern Expansion No. 2 and that a new storm water basin to provide storm water detention capacity would be located in the area north of the currently proposed 29.0-acre horizontal footprint.

2. Final Cover Soils. If a favorable feasibility determination is made, the department may include as a condition as needed for the plan of operation report to summarize existing soil testing data and/or obtain additional soil testing data of soil stockpiles to be used for soil barrier layer soil in the geosynthetic clay liner (GCL) final cover option is able to

meet the USCS soil types ML, CL, CH, SM, SC or dual classifications of these soils.

The department requests the above information to be received within the next 60 days (30 days by the end of the comment period), in an effort to review the items prior to the department issuing a feasibility determination.

Please contact Nathan Coller, Hydrogeologist at 715-635-4048 or nathan.coller@wisconsin.gov or Evan Gruszka, Waste Management Engineer at 715-492-2702 or evan.gruszka@wisconsin.gov if you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,

/Natasha Gwidt/

Natasha Gwidt, P.E.
Field Operations Director (Interim West Central/Northern Region Supervisor)
Waste and Materials Management Program

Enclosures: Notice of Feasibility Report Completeness
Project Summary/Environmental Analysis

cc: Dan LeClaire (dleclaire1@wm.com)
Teri Daigle (teri.daigle@tetratech.com)
Clerk, Town of Stubbs
Clerk, Rusk County
Library Director, Bruce Area Library
Brian Hayes – Wisconsin Waste Facility Siting Board (e-copy)
Paul Swart – Wisconsin Department of Administration (e-copy)
John Eide – DNR/AM (e-copy)
John Eaton – DNR/WT (e-copy)
Melissa Yarrington – DNR/WT (e-copy)
Joe Lourigan – DNR/WA (e-copy)
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