Lower Umatilla Basin (Oregon)/Safe Drinking Water Act: Food and Water Watch Petition for Emergency Action Submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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Food & Water Watch ("F&W") and a number of other organizations submitted a petition to the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") titled:

Petition for Emergency Action Pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act § 1431, 42 U.S.C. § 300i to Protect Citizens of the Lower Umatilla Basin in Oregon from Imminent and Substantial Endangerment to Public Health Caused by Nitrate Contamination of Public Water Systems and Underground Sources of Drinking Water ("Petition")

The Petition asks that EPA exercise what is described as Safe Drinking Water Act ("SDWA") emergency powers to address:

. . . groundwater contamination that is presented, and continues to present at ever-increasing levels, an imminent and substantial endangerment to the health of the residents of the Lower Umatilla Basin ("LUB") in Oregon.

F&W states that the data found in the Petition is based primarily on information compiled by:

- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Oregon Health Authority
- Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Umatilla and Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area Committee

The Petition alleges that the data demonstrates that nitrate concentrations in public water systems and underground sources of drinking water routinely exceed both federal and state drinking water standards. It further alleges:

- Drinking water contamination in the Lower Umatilla Basin groundwater constitutes an endangerment under the SDWA necessitating emergency action by EPA
- Oregon officials have failed to achieve safe drinking water quality despite decades of attempting to implement mitigation plans

- EPA emergency action is necessary to abate ongoing and ever-increasing endangerment to human health from nitrate contamination

A copy of the Petition can be downloaded [here](#).