Responsiveness Summary Related to Public Input Received on the Report Titled

"Relation Between Nitrate in Water Wells and Potential Sources in the Lower Yakima Valley, WA"

Dated September 2012

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Prepared by:

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9. Peer Review

Comment: Several commenters indicated the peer review conducted for the report was inadequate because: EPA did not follow its own peer review guidance; that the report was classified as "influential" by OMB and required more extensive review; EPA's selection of peer reviewers was not transparent and all four peer reviewers were from federal agencies; with the exception of one reviewer the comments received were brief and not adequately rigorous; and one peer reviewer stated that the nitrate in many

of the wells is most likely from a mix of sources which would be challenging to tease apart, probably requiring a much more extensive sampling campaign and more knowledge of well depth and screen lengths.

> EPA's response: EPA decided that the 2012 report did not require peer review according to the peer review guidelines available in November 2011 and classified the report as "Other" using the OMB work product classification criteria. Although EPA determined at the time it did not need to conduct a formal peer review it did decide to conduct an independent third party review using scientist from the Federal government. EPA asked scientist from USGS, USDA, EPA's ORD, and EPA regional scientist to review the document. EPA received comments on the draft report and incorporated those into the document. EPA provided sufficient time to reviewers and their comments reflect their judgment on the report. EPA did consider the comments of all reviewers and they helped EPA draw its conclusions including indicating the limitations and uncertainties in the study.

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