



To: Members of the Oregon House of Representatives
Re: Opposition to HB 3372A

From the Desk of:
State Rep. Anna Scharf

Representatives,

On behalf of Oregon's family farms and ranches, we **urge your NO vote on HB 3372A**. At a time when agriculture is under growing regulatory pressure, this bill undermines the fairness and sustainability of Oregon's water management system.

To be clear, this is not about opposing new or small farms or backyard gardens. Our concerns are about water use, consistency, and fairness. Oregon farmers and ranchers operate under some of the most regulated water laws in the country including new groundwater rules adopted in 2024 that effectively eliminate new groundwater pumping and development.

Key Concerns with HB 3372A:

- Incentivizes increased use, despite individual caps:**
While capped at 3,000 gallons per day, the bill authorizes over 1 million gallons per year (1,095,000 gallons) for a ½-acre commercial garden, more than 3 acre-feet annually, and enough to use a full acre-foot in just 4 months. Individual use may be capped, but this measure encourages more users and opens the door to widespread, unregulated commercial use.
- Moves the goalposts for lawful users:**
Farmers who followed the rules, purchasing land with certificated rights, building infrastructure, installing backflow devices, and complying with any required metering, are now watching the state authorize commercial uses without any of those requirements.
- Creates unfair and inconsistent standards:**
This bill creates a legal pathway for new, profit-driven commercial users to bypass the water right permitting process entirely, elevating exempt use to a near-equivalent of a water right, without the oversight, hydrologic review, or accountability.
- Undermines current groundwater protections:**
HB 3372A contradicts Oregon's recent efforts to protect and manage groundwater resources in overdrawn or sensitive basins where new rights are no longer viable.
- Not insignificant and not regulated:**
The bill applies no meaningful safeguards to ensure consistency with water policy goals. Without verification, mapping, or seasonal limits, this broad new exemption could exceed the impacts of current exemptions. Plain and simple, it expands current exemptions and monetizes the use of exempt water.

- **No consultation with agriculture:**

Proponents of this bill have charged forward with zero outreach to the regulated agricultural community and with no concern for impacts, perceptions, or the completely tone-deaf message this sends. This in the face of ongoing legislative proposals that have and will further restrict the ability for farmers and ranchers to use and manage water.

We support small farms, local food systems, and diversified agriculture, but that must be done in a way that respects the integrity of Oregon's water laws. Put plainly, **HB 3372A incentivizes more water use**, disadvantages those who followed the law, and undermines the science-based policies the state has put in place to protect the resource.

We urge your NO vote on HB 3372A.