

March 31, 2025

Co-chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water:

My name is Katie Shluka and I am a community member from Hebo. I am writing today to support HB 3372. Currently in Oregon it is legal to water a ½ acre garden or use 5,000 gal/day for a commercial purpose, but neither of those apply to growing food and farm products for sale.

We live in the small rural community near Hebo and I have to travel 30 minutes to Lincoln City or Tillamook to the nearest grocery store to purchase quality produce. Our Safeway has some of the most expensive produce in Oregon due to the distance it travels. We were thrilled when our neighbors began growing local produce for sale just across the street! Last year their small less than an acre market garden was shut down due to lack of commercial water rights. We could no longer get the local, affordable vegetables we had come to enjoy. It was awful hard to go back to wilted Safeway spinach after fresh greens from next door.

Oregon needs to find a way to allow market gardeners who provide fresh produce to neighbors and farmer's markets to be a priority water user. Local produce supports local economy, reduces waste and fossil fuels, and promotes health through more nutritious and fresher produce. Allowing people to grow food or farm products for sale with a gallon restriction on ½ acre will not bankrupt the system, and farming is too much work for people to rush into production on such a small scale. Give communities back the ability to feed and provide for themselves, pass HB 3372.

Thank you,

Katie Shluka
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