

Submitter: Teagan Moran

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

Greetings Committee Members,

My name is Teagan Moran, and I am both a farmer and a service provider working with farmers across the State of Oregon. My husband and I own a farm in Albany, Oregon, where we strive to contribute to our community's food system. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3372 and urge you to consider the significant positive impact it could have on farmers and local food systems throughout the state.

Currently, Oregon's water use laws allow individuals to water a ½ acre garden or use up to 5,000 gallons of water per day for commercial purposes. However, these allowances do not extend to farmers growing food and agricultural products for sale—an essential function for feeding our communities. This gap in water rights disproportionately affects small-scale farmers like myself, who are eager and equipped to grow fresh produce but are legally restricted by outdated regulations.

My husband and I have dedicated over a decade to farming. After completing a multi-year farmer training program with Rogue Farm Corps and gaining experience managing diverse vegetable farms, we worked for years to achieve our dream of owning a farm. However, the journey was fraught with challenges, particularly the high cost of farmland and the difficulty of finding land with water rights. After years of searching, we finally secured a property—but without water rights, our ability to farm has been severely limited.

While we have adapted by raising livestock without irrigating our pastures, we are unable to fully utilize our expertise in vegetable and fruit production. With minimal water—less than what many neighbors use for their lawns—we could significantly increase the availability of fresh produce in our community. We also have fruit trees that, with irrigation, could produce surplus fruit to share with our local food system. Since we cannot legally sell any irrigated produce, the potential of our land remains unrealized. Farming is a profession with notoriously tight profit margins, and often there is little to no profit at all. Without the ability to sell even a portion of what we cultivate, we are unable to sustain our operations and provide for our community.

HB 3372 represents a crucial opportunity to address this issue. The proposed exemption would not increase our water usage; it would simply allow us to channel existing resources toward growing food for our community. This change would empower small farmers to contribute to a vibrant, sustainable local food system,

supporting both food security and economic resilience. Moreover, it would enable us to pursue projects such as growing seed crops, which are vital for a robust agricultural ecosystem.

As farmers, we face numerous challenges every day—from unpredictable weather to fluctuating markets. Access to water should not be one of them, especially when we are striving to grow food for our neighbors and strengthen our local food systems. By passing HB 3372, you can help ensure that farmers like me have the tools and resources we need to succeed and to serve our communities effectively.

Thank you for your consideration and for supporting the future of Oregon agriculture. Together, we can build a more sustainable and self-reliant food system.

Sincerely, Teagan Moran