

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 Divya Appanna and I am a Community Member from Hillsboro. 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. Why is it legal to use the water for personal use, but selling a single zucchini from my garden would mean I was breaking the law?

This personally impacts me because:

Throughout the summer, we register with local CSA programs to receive fresh, farm-grown vegetables and dairy for our family. We believe that consuming locally produced food reduces our reliance on the global supply chain and minimizes resources wasted in freezing, shipping, and transporting produce across the world. Local farms, such as Edible Stories Market Garden, grow Asian vegetables that hold significant cultural importance in Indian cuisine. Although these farms may not be certified as "Organic," they employ pesticide-free natural techniques to ensure the wellbeing of soil, water sources, and pollinators.

We subscribe to the summer CSA program from StoneBoat PDX to receive our share of heirloom vegetables and fruits. During the summer, this reduces our grocery store visits by 70% due to the availability of fresh produce from local farms. Additionally, purchasing locally helps us cut down on the use of plastic needed for packaging. Food is most nutritious right after harvest, and we are able to consume these fruits and vegetables within one day of their harvest.

One of our favorite Sunday activities during the summer is visiting the closest farmers' markets. We can buy locally made bread, honey, jams, and other products, supporting local businesses and farmers.

Buying local also increases community health, as counties with a higher volume of local businesses have lower rates of mortality, obesity, and diabetes. It promotes agriculture by supporting the bee population, which is crucial for pollination and the production of one-third of the food we eat. Shopping at small businesses boosts the local economy by increasing community wealth and creating jobs. Furthermore, buying local reduces the use of fossil fuels and utilizes land more productively, minimizing food contamination risks and reducing CO2 emissions by shortening food miles. Supporting local farmers also promotes sustainable agriculture practices and fosters a sense of unity and connection within the community.

We need to be realistic about what we prioritize for water use in our state. 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,

Divya Appanna