

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 Karthik Raman, and I am a Community Member from Beaverton. 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?

As a community member, I recognize the vital role that small farms play in our local economy and food system. These farms provide fresh, locally grown produce, contribute to the sustainability of our community, and support local jobs. However, small farms often face challenges related to water usage and access, which can hinder their ability to thrive and serve our community effectively.

HB 3372 is a crucial step towards ensuring that small farms have the resources they need to succeed. By studying exempt uses of water, the Water Resources Department can identify ways to support small farms in their water needs, allowing them to continue providing high-quality produce to our community. This bill will help create a more equitable and sustainable water management system, benefiting both small farms and the broader community.

I urge the committee to pass HB 3372 and support the efforts to study and manage exempt uses of water, with a focus on empowering small farms to sell their produce. Thank you for considering my testimony.

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.

Sincerely,

Karthik Raman