

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 Madeline Swanberg and I am a farmworker from Portland. 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 I hope to one day start my own farm and will be impacted by legislation such as this bill that makes it difficult for small and beginning farmers to get a foot in the door. Currently, I get most of my food from local farmers who are also small and sustainable growers; I want them to be free to use water in the same way that other industries are currently allowed to. 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,

Madeline Swanberg