

Submitter: Karen Mularski

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

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 Karen Mularski and I am an aspiring farmer and farm community member, currently living in Portland but with plans to start growing (flowers) in Sisters, OR in the next 2-3 years.

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?

I and my husband are currently physicians - I work as a Hospitalist in Internal Medicine and Rich is in Pulmonary/Critical Care and is a researcher. We both have seen the devastating health consequences of unhealthy food choices (which in many “food desert” communities - disproportionately low income, disenfranchised folks - are not really choices given limited fresh food availability).

We feel that growing a big green lawn or having high-water use landscaping - though these beautify the community and support nature and pollinators- also important- should not take precedence or have superior “rights” over water use than using the same amount of water by those essential small farmers who grow healthy, sustainable food and raise livestock in a humane manner.

I very much hope that the newly enforced water use regulations will not further reduce access to local, sustainable, healthy food.

Having small farms in my neighborhood and across the state is important to our family.

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,

Karen Mularski, MD
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