

Submitter: Lexie Houchins-Park
On Behalf Of: Central Oregon Locavore Non Profit
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 Lexie Houchins-Park and I am the Outreach Coordinator of Central Oregon Locavore NonProfit in Bend, OR. 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.

At Central Oregon Locavore's marketplace, we work with nearly 100 small farmers and ranchers who struggle to bring nutrient-dense food to scale in this community due to the many challenges imposed by lack of equitable water rights and use opportunities. Many times our ranchers and farmers have told us that they've had to stop raising certain animals altogether, significantly reduce their crops, or have ended their businesses due to the impact lack of water use availability has had. This has resulted in a lack of fresh, local foods for our shoppers despite the ever-growing demand of local food. This community has, on numerous occasions, urgently voiced their concerns for the way water is used for non-commercial purposes. We all know that farmers and ranchers have a driving purpose in using this water in ways that benefit all of Central Oregon, from consumers to small businesses to our high desert ecosystems. I strongly urge the passing of this bill to help ensure local farms and ranches still have a future in the wake of tariffs, grant removals, and climate change.