

Submitter: Grace Krogh

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

My name is Grace and I am a farmer from Clackamas County. 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.

My husband and I purchased a small piece of land less than a year ago with the intention of building a farm from the ground up. We are some of the lucky few - land has become expensive in Oregon, so we feel incredibly grateful to have the means and opportunity to pursue this dream of providing high quality flowers and food to our community. We didn't fully understand the intricacies of water law in Oregon - in fact, no one in our corner did. Our real estate agent for buying the farm and the real estate agent for selling the farm both told us that because we had our own well on private land, we should be able to irrigate without issue. We quickly learned this isn't true. There are many things we are allowed by law to do with our domestic well. We can fill a swimming pool every other day. We can water large patches of grass or garden daily. We can even run a for profit car wash from our property and use up to 5,000 gallons of water per day for such a business. The one thing we cannot do is grow plants and sell them. This specific exclusion by law blocks so many potential farmers from doing the good work of providing food for their communities. Quite frankly, it's an exclusion that doesn't make any sense. If water conservation is the concern, then why are we allowed to do all of the above with our wells, with no oversight or permits required? All of the farmers I know are concerned about water conservation too, and have no intention of using water to the point of stretching this resource thin. In fact, I estimate that on a 1/2 acre of cultivated land I will use approximately 5,000 gallons of water per week. This is about 700 gallons per day, not even close to the daily limit for water usage. We are asking that you help us and all of the small family farms in our community by changing the law to include commercial agriculture irrigation.

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,

Grace Krogh