

Submitter: Nikolaus Elsaesser

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 Nikolaus Elsaesser and I am a community member from Corvallis. 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 tomato from my garden would mean I was breaking the law?

This personally impacts me because I have a vested interest in a resilient community which includes having as many sources of fresh food as possible. There are people in my community who can grow food very well and could really need supplemental income. I personally would like to have as large of a supply of local produce as possible, because fresher food contains more nutrients and smaller growers have more options for implementing pest control beyond mass application of pesticide/herbicide. Moreover, the more our communities can produce what they consume, the less we need to rely on imported goods from outside of our community & state. This is not just due to potential costs from imports, but it also means less reliance on the variable weather patterns outside of our communities. Letting our communities produce more of our own food helps us build stronger connections to the source of our food and ultimately strengthens the cultural connection to our food that is lacking in most communities. Lastly, it feels arbitrary and unfair to allow inefficient mass-scale water use in other agricultural practices, but to restrict the smallest scale of agriculture.

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,

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