

Submitter: Patrick Newson  
On Behalf Of: Rigberry Gardens  
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 Patrick Newson and I am a farmer from Pleasant Hill, Oregon . 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 the current water laws have prevented me from launching a farm on property owned by my family. Instead I have had to engage in more tenuous lease arrangements which are currently limiting growth and development of my small orchard project. If I had been able to plant and irrigate young trees (only for the first few years of their life) as an orchard for commercial sales, I would have already done so, and would have likely begun growing vegetables as well on that property. Instead, I have struggled uphill to access land with water rights, which has been a really challenging endeavor so far.

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,

Patrick Newson  
Rigberry Gardens  
Eugenem OR