

Submitter: Paul Gibbons

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

My wife and I have a small farm just outside of Clatskanie in Columbia County. We have less than 1/2 acre of land dedicated to growing vegetables and herbs. We have a private well with rights for domestic use. I recently applied for water rights to use the well for irrigation because we would like to sell some of our vegetables at the local farmer's market, and we recently learned that would be illegal. The application process has already cost more than \$3000 and it took several days of my time to create the map and complete the application. It's a good thing I am savvy with a computer because the map required finding the data for both county lot lines and the federal grid for sections/quarter sections because our county does not use the federal system to determine the location of lot lines in their mapping data. My time and money are a gamble, because I have no idea whether our right to sell our vegetables will be approved or not. Applying for water rights is not a good business decision, because it will take many years to pay back the cost of the application when we only have a few hundred dollars of vegetables available for sale each year. But the gamble is worth the risk for us for ethical reasons. We want our local food system to be more resilient. Growing vegetables is expensive and labor intensive and there is always excess in every garden. Why is it a crime for us to ask for compensation for our work? It doesn't make any sense. We only have so much garden space, so we are not going to be able to use more water just because we are selling the excess produce. Please support this bill.