

Submitter: Abby Kellner-Rode

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

My name is Abby Kellner-Rode and I am the farm owner of Boundless Farmstead, in Bend. 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 or a carrot from small farm gardens would mean they are breaking the law? Please pass HB 3372 and allow people to sell food and farm products grown within the exemptions of domestic wells.

This personally impacts me and all of Central Oregon for many reasons:

The age of farmers in Oregon has gone up to nearly 59 years old, and many farmers are planning to retire. This legislation does not affect my farm, because my farm is 20 acres and has senior water rights. But it affects so many other young farmers just starting out, around the state.

It is incredibly expensive to buy EFU land or ANY land today. Sometimes the only way to start as a farmer is on a very small piece of land.

There is a small movement of young farmers starting farms on very small pieces of land. These can be highly productive. There are a number of small farms operating in this area which are producing a lot of food. As a state, we need to make becoming a farmer easier and less expensive. By allowing small farms of 1/2 acre to use well water to irrigate the food they grow, we will be encouraging more food production and more investing in becoming farmers. This can become the first step towards farm ownership.

With the recent tariff news, it is even more important to allow us to become more self sufficient and not count on food products from elsewhere. 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.

Please give communities the ability to feed and provide for themselves, pass HB 3372.

Thank you for your service,

Abby Kellner-Rode

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