

Submitter: Finley Tevlin

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 Finley and I am a farmworker in Portland. 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 I aspire to run my own farm business. Many other young farmers also face barriers to land ownership, and often the easiest starting point is to run a micro-farm business in a backyard or nearby lot. In the Portland area, this is what is most available to beginning farmers. Without passage of this bill, I would not be able to start my farm business without purchasing land with an existing agricultural water right. While farming on these small plots might not seem significant, they are the training ground for the farmers of the next generation, and cumulatively, they contribute an overwhelming land base to the urban and peri-urban farm landscape, often feeding community members and supporting healthy livelihoods.

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,

Finley Tevlin