

Submitter: Beth Gates

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 Beth Gates and I am a community member from Portland.

I am writing today to support HB 3372.

Currently in Oregon there are exemptions for domestic exempt well use including: the stockwater exemption (unlimited water for livestock drinking water needs), a "single commercial or industrial use" (5,000 gal/day), for personal / domestic use (15,000 gal/day), NONcommercial gardening on a half acre or less (no gallon limit), and YET irrigation for commercial use on a half acre or less is specifically excluded.

For the past six years I have worked in support of small farmers and farmers markets in Oregon through my roles with both Slow Food Portland and Cook First Portland. I am an advocate for increasing agricultural and rural economic opportunity which strengthens our regional food system.

This issue personally impacts me because I shop mostly at farmers markets. As older farmers retire, beginning farmers are struggling to enter farming. Beginning and small farmers struggle to afford land, let alone land with water rights. We need to create pathways for small farms to legally grow food and farm products for sale. The more small farmers are able to grow food products and sell to their communities, the stronger and more resilient our local food systems become.

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,

Beth Gates
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