



April 7, 2025

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water:

From: Oregon Organic Coalition

RE: Support for HB 3372

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens and Members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Wong and I am the Director of the Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC). Incorporated in 2006, the OOC works to promote the growth of Oregon's organic industry and community.

One of our coalition members is Organic Valley, a farmer cooperative, which has a processing facility in McMinnville and considers Oregon an important state to their business model.

Last summer, Organic Valley let us know that one of their Oregon farmers encountered an issue with the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) and their new water master. The farmers lease the land from a family member. According to the farmer "Last year the county water master called farmers that were irrigating pastures without the proper water rights as administered by the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD). To give you an example, we have been irrigating our pastures for about 10 years. When the water master called last July and said that we only had a water right for domestic well use (homes and ½ acre/home) and not an irrigation right, the water master ordered us to cease and desist or face the penalty—I don't know what this penalty is because we turned off our sprinklers. The water master basically drove around and noted who had sprinklers on their fields. We asked the family member who we lease the farm from about this and they said they knew it was only a domestic water right but that the previous water master said it wasn't a big deal to irrigate. Thus, no irrigation water right was sought after. According to the current water master, obtaining more water rights is next to impossible and a cumbersome and potentially expensive process. Consequently, we have not had the time or energy to apply for an irrigation right. A grass farmer near has a similar situation in that they have 150+ acres of pasture that they would like to irrigate but only have irrigation rights for 50 acres.

Oregon needs 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Wong", with a stylized, flowing script.

Amy Wong

Oregon Organic Coalition - Coalition Director