

Submitter: Jason Waligoske
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

Testimony for the Record
Submitted to the
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
for the Hearing
upon OR HB 3372
April 7th, 2025
by Jason Waligoske
Organic Farmer

Co-Chair Helms, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald and Members of the Committee, thank you for focusing on this and other Bills regarding water rights and exemptions. There are few things that are as critical to our future and our ability to nurture a strategy for local food and resilience.

My name is Jason Waligoske. I am a business person and small organic farmer. I grew up in farming and have been growing organically for the last 32 years. I owned a health food store for 20 years, managing and owning other businesses in that time. Our farm distributes all of our food within a 30 mile radius, including to the 7th largest school district in Oregon and a large food bank. I would like to state for the record that the opinions expressed herein are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of our farm or it's Board of Directors.

In my experience I have seen many small, organic farms in Oregon being shut down due to a lack of water rights, a change in such or the inability to afford representation to maintain them. Small organic farms are not only essential to local food security and minimizing our transportation-related carbon footprint, but are also typically the most water-usage conscious farmers. I am pleased that this Congress is taking a step to suggest new exemptions to the Water Resources Department.

I urge the Committee to encourage the Water Resources Department to focus on organic or regenerative agriculture that distributes within a 200 mile radius to be exempt from or automatically included in Oregon Water Rights. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.