

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 Bobbi Wilson and I am a farmer in Myrtle Creek. I am writing today to support HB 3372. Currently in Oregon it is legal to use my domestic water source to irrigate a ½ acre garden for personal use or to use 5,000 gal/day for a commercial purpose, but it is illegal to use that same water to grow food and farm products for sale.

When I started developing my small farm in 2022, I knew that I would be limited to a half acre of vegetable production because the land I'm leasing only has domestic water rights. But I didn't know until my second season that it was illegal for me to use any of that water simply because I was selling the produce. I was already being very conservative with water usage by using drip irrigation and dry-farming half of my small plot. But when I learned that I wasn't allowed to use any of the water, and that doing so also threatened my eligibility for an NRCS conservation grant, I had to make a quick pivot and start paying to haul water to use for irrigation. That has significantly increased my cost of production and doesn't make any sense when I could be using the water for any other commercial purpose besides feeding my community and growing my small business. Why is it legal to use the water for a personal garden, but selling a single carrot from my garden would mean I was breaking the law?

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,

Bobbi Wilson  
Uphill Farm  
1223 Spring Brook Rd.  
Myrtle Creek, OR 9745