

Submitter: Zoe Bradbury DeSurra

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 Zoë Bradbury DeSurra I am a fresh market produce farmer in Langlois, Oregon. 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 a person cannot use that well water to grow food to sell to their local community. This ill-conceived restriction limits our ability to make our communities more food-secure, discriminates against small producers, and makes regional food systems less resilient at a time when we need to be making them much more resilient.

I have a personal interest in this issue because our water right was regulated off in August of 2023 for the first time ever in the 50-year family history of our farm. We have a legal water right recorded in 1965 from Floras Creek. Out of the blue at the peak of our growing season we received a postcard from Oregon Water Resource Department telling us we could no longer irrigate due to insufficient flow in Floras Creek. This was a devastating blow, given that very few of our crops can survive without weekly irrigation and we were in the hottest, driest part of the summer with rain still a couple months distant. If we had had the option to switch over to our well to irrigate a ½ acre that would have made a huge difference in our ability to weather that crisis. As climate change makes the world less predictable, farmers need more options to survive. Giving folks this one small tool could mean the difference between staying in business or not, feeding a remote, rural community or not.

Also, to be clear, we are environmentalists with a deep concern about climate change and the growing water crisis, and a lifelong love for the endangered salmon that spawn up our creek each winter. Because of this, we farm organically, we power our entire farm with solar energy and draft horses, we rely on cover crops, compost and crop rotation to improve the health and water retaining capacity of our soil, and we conserve water in every way possible through the use of drip irrigation and timing. We have re-planted the entire one-mile length of our streambank back to native species to create shade, reduce erosion and improve salmon habitat in Floras Creek. And we produce an enormous amount of food from our small farm footprint. We are also the ONLY commercial produce farm of this scale between Brookings and Florence, in part because few people want to work this hard, but also because most people don't have access to legal water to get a market garden started. That puts the Southcoast of Oregon in a precarious place, if all of our food has to be shipped in

from afar.

We are not asking for unlimited new access to water. We are simply asking that you allow people to grow food or farm products for sale with a gallon restriction on ½ acre. Give communities back the ability to feed and provide for themselves, pass HB 3372.

Thank you,

Zoë Bradbury DeSurra
Valley Flora Farm
95080 Floras Creek Road, Langlois, OR 97450