

Submitter: Katie Swanson

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 Katie Swanson and I am a vegetable farmer from Klamath Falls. 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 neither of those apply to growing food and farm products for sale. Why is it legal to use the water for personal use, but selling a single zucchini from my garden would mean I was breaking the law?

Klamath Falls is a food desert and there is a need for more produce vendors at the farmers market. It also has complicated agricultural issues. I believe that small-scale, urban produce growers are an important part of the solution to our food access issues, but they cannot be forced to break the law every time they sell something. I started out as a small-scale grower on an urban one acre lot and have since expanded to a larger farm where I'm able to infuse our local market with a lot of fresh vegetables. Everyone has to start somewhere and it's not fair to have no restrictions on home garden water (which is much less efficient and productive) and crippling restrictions on a market gardener feeding their community.

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,

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