

April 7, 2025

Co-chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water:

Dear Madame and Sir

My name is Joseph Steinbach and I am a resident of Lane County, near Eugene.

When I retired and we moved here 10 years ago, we were very excited by the support Oregon gave to small farm agriculture and the strong network of growers markets, including the Spencer Creek Community Growers Market near us. For several years we sold our eggs and produce at that market and greatly enjoyed the variety of fresh produce available and the sense of community among growers and clients. Eventually, as age caught up with us, we stopped selling but continued to buy the wonderful produce at the market. For the past year the extreme efforts of the Oregon Water Resources Department have essentially prohibited growers from raising and selling their produce at the market and have cut us off from this valued community resource.

Since I first arrived and read about the arcane regulations regarding water use in Oregon I have been mystified by the banning of access for the vast majority of small growers. Why does Oregon support small family growing efforts with one hand and forbid them access to the means to succeed with the other?

It is past time to bring all parts of Oregon's state bureaucracy together to support this critical effort to provide continuing access to local, healthful and delicious food!

Sincerely yours

Joseph Steinbach
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