

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 Jennifer Rice, and I am a community member from just outside the city limits of Eugene. 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 buying a single onion from my neighbor at our local market might mean I was breaking the law because they watered that onion with their well?

This personally impacts me because I like to support my neighbors by purchasing the produce that they grow on their small farms at our very local farmer's market at the Spencer Creek Grange. My young daughter loves this weekly routine—to say howdy to our neighbors and pick up some local produce at the same time. This market is more than a place of commerce. It's a place to check up on friends and neighbors, a place to connect with new people who've recently moved in, a place to learn, a place to give support to people who need it, and a place to share laughs and smiles. If small farms are unable to sell their produce there, this local farmer's market dies—and so does our access to all the richness it provides.

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,
Jennifer Rice
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