

Submitter: Marcella Hill

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 Marcella Hill and I am a farmer in Brownsville, Oregon. I am writing today to support HB 3372-5. 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 pumpkin or tomato or flower, from my garden would mean I was breaking the law?

This personally impacts me because: we are first year farmers and every loan and grant opportunity that existed last year, is gone this year. We still chose to move forward since we had purchased the land. We did make a water plan with rain tanks but it would be incredibly expensive to expand year after year with those as our only source, since all costs for farming have started to soar.

Food accessibility will become more limited this year with the national policies changing. Those in rural communities like mine, have even greater limited access, due to the lack of a grocery store. Our property sits on a highway off the 1-5 and is the connecting factor to other communities. If we are able to offer more fruits, vegetables and flowers to those in a you pick format, it will increase the health community and limit the cost of those crops to produce.

Our families' own economics will be healthier and we will gain the needed funds to prepare for the next year. Farms attempt to be self-sufficient and family farms already exist on thin margins. Small family farms strengthen communities and local economics and foster good relations. Often a customer is interested in the process of growing and will have a friendly chat with a farmer.

As far as I understand the bill the total use of the water doesn't change. Only how we can use it.

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. The solution in this bill does not increase the overall water available for exempt use, it simply allows people to sell the food and

farm products it is already legal to grow.

Give communities back the ability to feed and provide for themselves, pass HB 3372-5.

Thank you,

Marcella Hill  
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