

Submitter: Maren Beck

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 Maren Beck, and my husband and I live just outside of Eugene in Lane County. 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 zucchini from my garden would mean I was breaking the law?

This personally impacts me because, in the past, I have sold some of my excess produce at a local market, not realizing that it was not allowed. Rather than waste food, I wanted to get to it people to could use our organically grown produce where we over-planted or the year provided a bumper crop we didn't expect.

I've heard that our local grange has lost vendors due to this issue once they realized selling their produce from their tiny gardens was illegal. Personally, I haven't lost any income from knowing about this law, but it is unreasonable for this penalty to be placed on families and small "businesses" that sell excess food from their gardens. I'm confident the volume is not sufficient to damage any large commercial growers. Additionally, encouraging people to have their own gardens, raise their own food, teach their children to grow food, and making a connection to the land is nothing but healthy for the growers and anyone who purchases their small excess produce. This law will support healthier families.

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,

Maren Beck
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