

Submitter: Leah Rodgers

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 Leah Rodgers and I am the Owner/ Operator of Indigo Gardens in Scappoose, Oregon. I am writing to urge you to support HB3372.

Passing this bill to allow small-scale commercial farms to use water from domestic wells would do A LOT for farmers' peace of mind, fortify local food and flower economies around the state, and would require very little effort from the Legislature to make this correction. I see this mainly as a housekeeping issue. Current laws already allow for commercial operations to use limited amounts of water from domestic wells except for agriculture. Let's say I have a pickle business. Legally my operation can make a delicious brine and preserve this high-acid product via the water bath method and sell that product under the Farm Direct Marketing bill (aka the Pickle Bill) using water from my domestic well. But as it stands now, it is not legal to grow the cucumbers for my business which frankly doesn't make sense. This is the part that needs fixing.

I am not a pickle farmer but I am a commercial flower grower with a domestic well. I submitted my application for a water right in September of 2024 at a cost of \$5000. This is an incredibly expensive inquiry just to find out if I will be able to legally irrigate crops on farmland that I own. In full transparency, \$2000 of that cost was to retain a certified water rights examiner to file my application to increase my chances of success. IF I am granted a water right, there is still nearly \$700 more to pay for the recording. If I am not able to secure a water right to irrigate my farm, passing this Bill would provide a pathway to compliance.

Agriculture is viewed as a "beneficial use" of state waters. Let's make choices that support this beneficial use! Farming is difficult enough and increasingly more challenging for a variety of factors. Passing HB 3372 would let small farmers in Oregon know that the state has our hard-working backs.

Thank you for the opportunity to make my voice heard on the issue.

Respectfully,

Leah Rodgers

