

Submitter: Madeleine Cole

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 Madeleine and I am a community member and local food systems advocate from Eugene. 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 I prioritize buying produce from small local growers, and many of these growers that I want to support are unable to obtain water rights, which has impacted their ability to sell their products. This is hurting our local food economy. One of the things that I value most about living in the Willamette Valley is being able to easily access local food throughout the year. I love that I can swing by my local farmstand on the way home from work to pick up what I need. These small farms will go away if we do not pass this amendment.

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,

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