



Testimony in Support of HB 3372 to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

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Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to urge your support for HB 3372 with the -5 Amendment. HB 3372 provides a common sense reform to allow very small farms and market gardens to use domestic well water to produce agricultural products for sale. The current system sets no limits on the exempt use of domestic well water on ½ acre lawns or non-commercial gardens, but prohibits any use of the same water if it is used to grow food for sale on the same sized plot. This is unfair and outdated.

We farm and ranch on nearly 70 acres of mostly irrigated farmland in the Scio area, raising grass fed beef and goat, pasture raised pork, hay, and vegetables. Because we have established water rights to irrigate roughly 50 acres of pasture for livestock, hay crops, and a ¼ acre market garden, this bill will not impact our operation.

But when we were first getting started in farming on a small 5 acre homestead nearly 20 years ago, we were directly impacted by the inability to use our domestic well water for a small ⅛ acre commercial food plot even on land zoned as 'rural residential farm forest'. For us, in order to farm on this property, we had to pay significant sums of money to access water from a municipal provider. Despite the steep cost, we were lucky to have access to a rural municipal water system as many similar small properties on domestic well systems in Oregon do not. The irony is that if we had wanted to keep our lawn green even during the driest months, this well water would have been available to us, but it would have been against the law if we were using any of this very same water to instead grow crops for sale on our small ⅛ acre food plot.

It's time to reform this outdated approach to domestic well water use as it relates to small-scale commercial farms. HB 3372 and the -5 amendment set limits on both the size of the commercial food plot allowed (up to ½ acre) and the amount that can be used (up to 3000 gallons per day) while also applying this new volume limit to lawns or non-commercial food plots up to ½ acre. The bill also makes clear that the total combined use of the commercial food plot, plus any industrial or other commercial uses, cannot exceed 5,000 gallons per day. It's a good balance.

Again, we urge your support for HB 3372-5. Thank you for your consideration.

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