

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 Nikita Vincent, owner and operator of Twig and Bloom Flower Farm, a micro flower farm based in West Salem, Oregon. I'm writing to express my strong support for HB 3372-5.

As a small-scale food and flower farmer, I rely entirely on selling my products at local farmers markets, directly contributing to community food security and my family's livelihood. Currently, I farm on a leased property because my home sits on just 0.03 of an acre, significantly limiting my ability to produce at a scale necessary for economic sustainability.

Unfortunately, due to recent enforcement actions by the Oregon Water Resources Department concerning domestic wells, I've had to freeze production for the season upon learning of these restrictive interpretations of the existing statute through my involvement with Friends of Family Farmers (FoFF). Without the proposed -5 amendment, my ability to continue farming sustainably and economically on leased land would be severely jeopardized.

Small farmers like myself already face numerous obstacles, particularly around land access and water rights, placing us at an inherent disadvantage compared to larger, well-established agricultural businesses. Some opposition claims that HB 3372-5 would unfairly increase competition with larger farms. This simply isn't accurate—small farms operate at a vastly smaller scale and use minimal water compared to large agricultural operations. In fact, we contribute significantly to the resilience of local food systems, as clearly demonstrated during the pandemic.

Passing HB 3372-5 would provide equitable opportunities for small-scale producers to contribute meaningfully to local economies and community food security without negatively impacting larger agricultural businesses or overall water resources. I respectfully urge you to pass HB 3372-5, allowing small farmers a fair chance to thrive and enhancing our state's overall food security and sustainability.

Thank you,

Nikita Vincent
Twig and Bloom Flower Farm
West Salem, OR