

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire:

My name is Jennifer Rackley, and I am a farmer from Logsden, Oregon.] I am writing today to support HB 3372 A. Currently in Oregon, it is legal to water a ½ acre garden or use 5,000 gal/day for a commercial purpose using a domestic well, but neither of those apply to growing food and farm products for sale. I paid for my well, I try and collect rain water but the reliable systems are far too expensive for my small farmer budget.

This personally impacts me, as a small farmer, selling medicinal herbs, edible flowers, and general produce from western Oregon, where it generally stops raining in June and doesn't start again until October. I learned of this law when I applied for and obtained a high tunnel from the high tunnel NRCS grant. Our regional representative shared this information with me and I had to create and show proof that I was not using our domestic well for production. At one point I was literally hauling 5 gallon buckets of collected rainwater up the hill to our growing space. I use roughly 100 gallons per day or less for watering plants, as I also use dry farming techniques. This still equates to 700 gallons a week and 2800 gallons per month. I currently have two, 300 gallon tanks for collecting rainwater. They were purchased used, off craigslist, because purchasing new or larger cisterns is way out of my budget. This doesn't even get me through a week of watering once the rain stops.

By being allowed to use my domestic well water I would be more successful at growing my crops, which are small, but needed in my community. My community would then have better access to more locally grown, organically grown, healthy foods. There are only a handful of us out in this rural area that have the knowledge, space and privilege to grow this food. To gain access to other locally grown foods, people have to wait for a Saturday Market in Newport, and that is over 30 minute drive, one way, from Logsden.

We need to be thoughtful about what we prioritize for water use in our state. This bill is a simple, common-sense solution that would allow people to sell the food and farm products that are already legal to grow, while adding reasonable limitations to the amount of water that can be used.

Give communities back the ability to feed and provide for themselves, and pass HB 3372 A!

Thank you,

Jennifer Rackley

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