

Submitter: Janet Marrs
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Janet Marrs and support House Bill 3372.

I am a farmer from Cove, Oregon operating an 18 acre farm in the heart of the Grande Ronde Valley. We raise dairy goats, a variety of fruits and vegetables and grass hay. We sell eggs and products from our bee's including honey and bee's wax.

I am here today in support of this bill because I believe it's the right thing to do. I've heard concern that allowing home gardeners to sell their produce at farmers markets is unfair to those who entered into farming through traditional water rights methods – as a farmer operating with water rights, I simply don't see the validity of that concern.

My farming operation is in no way threatened by the types of growers that this bill is trying to help – home-scale gardeners operating on ½ acre of land or less, using a domestic well. These gardeners are already allowed to grow food, and I see no good or value in continuing to criminalize the sale of what they grow.

There will always be a need for food in our state. We should be finding ways to support food production, as we have identified food deserts in both rural and urban areas of our state.

I used to operate a micro urban farm but I have been able to transition into rural farming here in Union County. I don't see any inherent conflicts between urban farming and rural farming, and often one leads beautifully into the next.

HB 3372 will allow home gardeners in urban and rural areas alike a very narrow pathway into the world of farming, limited to a reasonable scale, with reasonable water use restrictions. Perhaps one day, like me, folks selling on a micro-scale will gain an interest in opening a larger operation – at which time, they will need to go through the regular water rights process, like everyone else. But these two realities can co-exist without conflict. The journey to farming is often done in baby steps.

I support HB 3372 because the first baby step into farming is an important one. While my farm will not benefit from this bill, we have benefited from Oregon's cottage food laws, which like this bill were intended to enable a viable pathway for smaller scale

food production.

We should be of one mind in this way, no matter the size or scale of our operation. Selling food is our common goal as farmers, and HB 3372 will allow more people to sell food -- this can only be a net positive for our agricultural economy.

And with that, I urge your support for this common-sense but critical bill.