

Testimony in Support of HB 2723

Stacey Givens-Owner
The Side Yard Farm
6704 NE Wygant St.
Portland, OR 97218

The Side Yard Farm is an urban farm located in the Ne Cully Neighborhood in Portland, Oregon. We provide 15 local restaurants with creative organic produce and the community with food, farm education and opportunity since 2009. The farm is largely operated by volunteers and interns who gain hands on experience with the urban seed to plate movement. We currently have one hundred people on the volunteer email list that are inspired by urban farming and that list grows more each week. In the last two years we have been able to create jobs for the community by hiring farm hands and managers. The Side Yard offers DIY educational workshops, farm tours, grief groups, kids farm camp and private seed to plate catering. Our focus is to provide local food for the local community, from the seeds we sow, animals we raise and to the craftsmanship we embrace. We grow our produce sustainably and ethically on two acres of land within three different farm plots of the Ne Cully neighborhood. The farm produces a wide range of seasonal veggies, fruits, flowers, honey and culinary herbs.

Our urban farm operation would greatly benefit from the passing of HB 2723. We lease one acre located at 4800 ne Simpson St from a couple in the neighborhood, Ken & Deborah Willett. They bought the land so that housing development wouldnt take over our neighborhood. We have a 12-year lease with them. The other two properties I lease are also owned by very generous people that want to see urban farming spread throughout our diverse, low income neighborhood. One property is located at 6704 ne Wygant st owned by Thomas Tilton and the other at 5940 Ne 45th st is owned by Bob Granger. I pay over \$5,000 total a year in rent for the two acres of land, not to mention the cost of city water which at times can be \$200-300 a month. There have been times that my landlords have gotten offers on their land that I farm and have come very close to selling. If they had some sort of incentive other than having a beautiful urban farm on their property, I would have more security to continue farming.

If HB 2723 becomes law, my landlords would take advantage of the reduction in taxes and pass those savings on to us for sure. We would become more profitable and have more security as we make future plans for our urban farm. The high speed rate that Portland is progressing with housing development, I feel at risk every season wondering if its my last. The community is our first priority and we impact so many individuals and

families with farm education, hyper-local veggies and a safe place to go. A large population would be forever changed if we did not exist. Multnomah County already acknowledges urban agriculture, but there needs to be more security for urban farmers and benefits for landowners. This new policy would encourage urban agriculture even more, provide food security, jobs and education for communities throughout the city of Portland.

Thank you for this opportunity. I strongly encourage the passing of HB 2723, the benefits will greatly impact the Ne Cully Neighborhood (“the urban farming district”) and all of Portland.

Best,
Stacey Givens-Owner

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