

Submitter: Jen Davis

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

I have a 1/2 acre farm. We grow delicious organic heirloom vegetables such as purple huckleberry potatoes, giant red mustard greens, Pink Princess cherry tomatoes and Karate cabbage. These aren't just fancy names- these are rare, very nutritious delicious crops which large scale ag can't/won't grow to accommodate shipping and marketing pressures from large stores.

But our small farm can delight the palate, help conserve these precious vanishing crops, and provide folks really healthy food while protecting our soil, water, air and feeding crucial bees, birds, frogs, snakes and other wildlife.

Farming is incredibly hard work- and pays very little. People do this kind of work for love, not big dollars. Few farmers can afford big acreage with water rights. To deny small craft farmers the right to make a little money to pay for the numerous costs of growing healthy food- simply because they are not rich or lucky enough to have water rights- only further deters youth from learning how to farm responsibly- and enables big ag with deep pockets to gobble up our land and water to grow much less nourishing, much less delicious food- and more often than not with an arsenal of poisons.

At a time when we are seeing record losses of birds, mammals and insects, including the keystone organism thr honeybee- we must do everything possible to encourage small bio diverse farms to flourish. Small organic farms- often an acre or less in size- are crucial refuges for threatened and vanishing soil organisms and insects.

As you may know-

"Honey bee colonies across the United States are facing record-breaking losses in 2025, with scientists warning the impact could be felt in agricultural production.

Washington State University entomologists announced this week that commercial honey bee colony losses are projected to reach between 60% and 70% in 2025."

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/honey-bee-colonies-face-70-losses-2025-impacting/story?id=120191720>

The costs of small organic farming are significant- seeds, compost and other fertilizers, equipment, labor, tools, transportation, license fees, insurance...the list

goes on and on.

But the benefits to our society from a little healthy plot are enormous- for example, thousands of rare crops which are highly nutritious and delicious would disappear without small boutique farms. Those heirloom tomatoes would largely vanish!

Bees, butterflies, ladybugs, songbirds, raptors, snakes, frogs would struggle to find ample habitat and forage. Our collective knowledge of small hands-on farming would largely disappear- knowledge which for thousands of years has helped humans to survive. And just the pure joy of buying fantastic food from little farms, and serving these healthy, beautiful crops, the pride of our nation -to our families- would be lost.

It is folly to penalize a little farmer for watering their crops with their own well water. Anyone knows that well water is precious and the farmer who needs that water for drinking and bathing won't be wasteful with it. Spend energy going after CAFOs owned by giant agriculture-biz, which consume enough water for small cities and do nothing to protect our soil, air, water or bees or other wildlife.

Thank you and may you be healthy and well-nourished!