

Submitter: Evelyn Lee

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3372

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 Evelyn Lee and I am a rural resident from south Benton County, Oregon. I am writing today to support HB 3372. Currently in Oregon it is legal to water a ½ acre garden or use 5,000 gal/day for a commercial purpose, but neither of those apply to growing food and farm products for sale.

In addition, the area where I live has numerous small acreage properties zoned EFU that lack a water right which limits opportunities to comply with EFU zone requirements because they cannot use their domestic well to grow food for sale except livestock.

I believe we are entering a period in history in which food security will become increasingly important to everyone. I also believe that many young people would like to enter into farming as a profession but the financial barriers are high and they are compounded by the water rights issue. Rural residential and EFU property without a water right is less expensive than property that has a water right.

I greatly respect the argument that we must protect our groundwater from depletion. However the current bill includes requirements that seem to safeguard the groundwater resource.

I would like to use this opportunity to add that monitoring groundwater use has become easier and less expensive using new technologies. I am aware of two communities in the Willamette Valley that are voluntarily monitoring wells and sharing data in community groundwater networks, and there is interest in other locations also. The technology is affordable and has been vetted by Oregon Water Resources Department and US Geologic Survey. My community has eight years of groundwater data from our community groundwater network. Please contact me for details.

I mention this because the concept of monitoring groundwater is a good fit to allay concerns and prevent over use of groundwater. Well monitoring such as that in our community provides inexpensive and instantaneous real time data could also be useful to provide information where commercial use of domestic wells is developed for growing food and farm products for sale. This may not be a good fit for HB 3372, but it is something that could be considered.

I support HB 3372. It makes sense to allow production of food for sale from ½ acre using water from a domestic well without a water right.

Evelyn Lee
25776 Alpine Rd.

Monroe OR 97456