

Submitter: Meredith Bell

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 Meredith Bell and I am a grape farmer in Oregon City, and a community member in the city of Portland. 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. Why is it legal to use the water for personal use, but selling a single zucchini from my garden would mean I was breaking the law?

This personally impacts me because having access to local vendors and farmers markets and access to food from small farms is really important to me personally. As a small farmer myself, I know how hard it is, and as a consumer, I want to support small and local farmers, who grow healthier and more sustainable food. Creating barriers for small local farmers means fewer farms can survive, and members of our community have less access to local, healthy food.

We need to be realistic about what we prioritize for water use in our state. Allowing people to grow food or farm products for sale with a gallon restriction on ½ acre will not bankrupt the system, and farming is too much work for people to rush into production on such a small scale. Give communities back the ability to feed and provide for themselves, pass HB 3372.

Thank you,

Meredith Bell
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