

Honorable 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 Gale Ousele and am writing to urge you to support HB 3372.

I have lived in Tillamook County since 1984. I grew up on a small farm in California and it has been heartening to me to see the resurgence of young people taking up small farming as a livelihood here on the coast. I have been pleased to be able to purchase sustainably grown, locally produced food which feeds my family and supports my community, both economically and through the wonderful place-based culture generated by our farmers markets.

It is disheartening to find that the 5,000 gallons of water use allowed outright for "Commercial" uses does not include small farmers growing on ½ acre or less and selling their produce. As it stands now, these small producers must have water rights comparable to large agriculture concerns. As you are aware, the amount of groundwater used by small scale users is far less than 10% of that used by irrigation water rights holders.

HB3372 is a chance to support small farms without appreciably increasing water use. By doing so we can help to grow diverse, sustainable agriculture and provide diverse rural economic opportunity. I urge you to pass this bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Gale Ousele  
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