

Submitter: Neeraja Havaligi

On Behalf Of: Edible Stories Market Garden

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

Topic: Measure, Appointment or HB3372

I'm writing in support of HB 3372. HB 3372 will give small farms and people in their communities a path to access food and nutritional security and food sovereignty. It will support resilient rural economies and deepen the rural-urban relationships, bringing people and places together into rich place-based relationships networked intricately through food- growing, selling and sharing the joy of nurturing each other through the profoundly moving act of producing food.

HB 3372 is a practical solution to food deserts, loss of biodiversity, inefficient water management, and weaknesses in supply chains that have lasting social, economic and environmental impacts. This bill promotes responsible use of common resources and supports the State's interest in managing a shared, limited asset wisely in a disciplined and productive manner.

The reason and inspiration for this letter is our experience with small farms like Edible Stories Market Garden, local farmers markets and other food businesses that are an intricate part of a regional network enabling access to real-time good food. Further, small farms such as Edible Stories Market Garden that produce culturally relevant and appropriate food provide me with opportunities to create, share and pass on intergenerational food memories to my family and community. Food is a powerful way to build family and community relationships from the ground up.

Small farms and farmers markets that support these farms and networks of intertwined food businesses strengthen local economies, reduce our reliance on out-of-state grocery chains, give us more flexibility in what we can grow and how, connect us with local businesses keeping our dollars within the state while ensuring conservation practices that protect the land and its resources to the future generations.

History reminds us of the power of collective gardens and small-scale farming. I urge you to pass HB 3372 as a practical way to strengthen rural economies, improve and strengthen the urban-rural interactions and connections, improve food access across the state and reconnect people to nature, their communities and families through food. HB 3372 will give communities back the ability to feed and provide for themselves, protect farmers who work hard, and allow them to continue nurture the land and people as they have done.

I urge you to pass HB 3372.

Neeraja Havaligi

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