

Sophia Cassam

From: Learner Limbach <learner.limbach@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 1:15 AM
To: Comp Plan Update
Subject: Comment for Housing Needs Assessment/current Draft Housing Element

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Please consider this a public comment on the Housing Needs Assessment/current Draft Housing Element.

I am submitting this comment to ask that the County Council immediately impose a moratorium on the issuance of new Vacation Rental Permits. I would suggest a moratorium of 6-12 months rather than an indefinite moratorium. At the end of that period it will be known whether a continuation of the moratorium is needed.

I believe a 6-12 month moratorium would: 1) ease tensions in the community; 2) boost public morale and restore faith in our county political process by demonstrating that the expressed opinions of our citizens matter; 3) allow for constructive dialogue to take place resulting in broad agreement and the ultimate adoption of new sensible Vacation Rental regulations as a next step for building on what has already been done.

As you know, the issue of VRs has reached a boiling point with many in our community, particularly on Orcas Island. While I do not place blame on any one factor or party, there are legitimate reasons for why people feel the way they do, not the least of which is a need to be heard, seen and respected.

Our community is feeling the impacts of the shortage of affordable housing (either to rent or own), as well as the rising cost of living in the islands relative to wages and a growing economic gulf between those who can afford to live here and those who cannot.

The quality and essence of our community is being eroded and pushed out, traded for short-term economic gains that offer little in the way of true resiliency for our community in the long-term.

I recognize that much has been done already to reign in the number of VRs in the county and enforce compliance with regulations that already exist. The reality is that the measures taken, in many people's view, have been too little, too late. That is the reason we are where we are, and why a moratorium is now needed. It may not be the perfect solution, but for the reasons I stated above, it is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Learner Limbach
Orcas Island