

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** Alexandra Gayek <gayek07@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2020 10:25 AM  
**To:** Comp Plan Update  
**Subject:** Comments on housing plan

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Hello,

I am a homeowner in Olga, on Orcas Island. I am experiencing an extreme increase in stormwater across my property as a result of development on properties uphill from me which in every case involved removal of trees, which absorb water, and construction of buildings that cause an increase in directed runoff, in the absence of connection to county stormwater drains.

I have personally experienced the county refusing to enforce the setback ordinance, which then leads to fighting with neighbors about having trees.

I see that there is tax relief for the larger property owners who actively log, but not for property owners who leave trees and other vegetation in place, which would make a positive contribution to the climate change problem.

It seems to me that development pressure to create affordable housing, combined with the constant increase in vacation rentals, chamber of commerce initiatives to increase tourism, increased island populations, increased number of realtors trying to make a living by pushing for more development, all of which add up to the result that "growth is the goal", directly contradict the goal of being the greenest county in the country, and create environmental problems faster than they can be resolved.

I would strenuously urge the county to consider adopting an "island happiness index" similar to that of the country Bhutan, to replace the ways our county seems to join in the national agenda of "economic growth and development at all costs." This would mean a goal of LOWERING the human population, LOWERING tourism, DECREASING the number of vacation rentals, DECREASING development, while INCREASING protection for wilderness, INCREASING interdependence in our communities, focusing on **SUSTAINABILITY, NOT GROWTH.**

The plan should be focused on better use of already developed land, rather than any further wild-land destruction to make way for more human activities--at the eventual demise of the natural beauty of the islands, the earth itself, and those very humans who wanted "more."

Thank you.  
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