

Sophia Cassam

From: Jennifer Low <jlow76@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:19 PM
To: Council Public Comment
Subject: Vacation Rental Moratorium

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To Whom It May Concern:

I lived on Orcas for 5 years as a child and then another 18 years on San Juan. I moved away to Bellingham 10 years ago where I still reside today. Last July, my son and I were able to move back home to San Juan because my work has been remote since March due to the pandemic. I moved home to live with my mom, Cat Bordhi, and care for her as she died of metastatic cancer. Her home on Egg Lake Road is a magical peaceful place nestled amongst the trees and still strongly imbued with her warm giving energy. If you are one of few who did not know her personally I can tell you she was a dear teacher and mentor to many islanders. My son and I stayed on another two months after she died in late September. Going back to stay in her space means the world to me. I have done so monthly since coming back to Bellingham. I have not yet brought myself to sort or give away her things. I have been taking that process of her loss slowly so I had not yet applied for a vacation rental permit. Keeping my mom's home, that she proudly bought when I was 9, and deeply loved ever since means the world to me. Being able to spend time there is essential to my mental well being. Her spirit still lives there. That is why I had planned to transition to a well maintained low volume vacation rental - so I could visit regularly but not just have it sit empty. The moratorium will not incite me to make it a long term rental or sell it. It will just prevent an income stream that I had planned to use to continue my mom's long-standing support of the Family Resource Center. If shutting down vacation rental permits directly increased affordable housing on the island I would understand it's purpose. What I see is that responsibly maintained vacation rentals are a key source of income allowing many islanders to live on the islands themselves. Islander owned vacation rentals allow these islanders to afford to stay. While my personal incentive to be able to obtain a permit is emotional, for the majority retaining their existing permits under current regulations is economically essential. I believe you are remiss in placing this moratorium and implore you to reconsider.

Best,

Jenny Low
(360) 317-5257

2915 Pacific Street
Bellingham, WA 98226

1074 Egg Lake Road
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

Sent from my iPhone