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From: Dan Christopherson <danlchris@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 11:46 AM
To: Jamie Stephens; Erika Shook; Christine Minney; Cindy Wolf; Mike Thomas; Council Public Comment
Subject: Vacation Rental Moratorium

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Dear Council Members,

The Vacation Rental Moratorium should be revoked.

In coming up with the Moratorium, it appears to me that the Council and the Planning Commission are listening to one very vocal and organized group, the Vacation Rental Working Group. The Working Group consists mainly of members from Orcas, and are mostly from two affected areas, the densely residential hills east of Eastsound, and also Deer Harbor. The problem with this group is they have come up with unsubstantiated arguments and keep repeating them. This is the political propaganda technique of repeating distortions and misrepresentations of the facts. If these invalid arguments are repeated enough times, people will eventually come to believe them.

Here are FIVE of their false assertions:

1. The majority of owners of vacation rental properties (51%) do not live in San Juan County.

The truth is that their factual basis for this is not valid or relevant. County records will show many off-island addresses of residents that may either have more than one home, or that may have a trustee's address where the County sends mail that pertains to their property. Neither case disqualifies them as residents of San Juan County.

2. Transient occupants are not resident in the community long enough to establish relationships capable of building community.

The truth is that many of our seasonal visitors actually do establish a relationship with the community. They make friends of residents, develop deep concerns for the islands' quality of life, and many eventually become full or part-time residents. Most of us residents came here first as tourists.

3. Vacation rentals are the primary source of over-tourism, and we can manage growth by managing vacation rentals.

The truth is that visitors will keep coming if the ferries keep running. The islands have always accommodated them in one way or another because they support our economy and have always been one of our main industries. It may be possible to limit tourism by regulating and limiting accommodations, but it would have to include all types, not just VRs. While VRs may be an easy target for accommodation limits, impacts on the ground are caused by numbers of overnight visitors regardless of where they stay.

4. VRs reduce affordable housing.

The truth is that very few dwellings used as VRs would qualify as affordable. The Working Group insinuates that a \$400k unit is affordable. Rent would have to be \$4000/mo. just to cover the mortgage.

5. VRs harm our environment by using more water and producing more sewage.

The truth is that since they are occupied less than full-time housing, they have less environmental impact.

This Moratorium is not justified. There is no emergency and there is no verifiable harm.

Let the 2018 new VR regulations be enforced and allowed to work.

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