



County Council,

On behalf of the Housing Lopez Board, we would like to make the following comment on the January 2021 moratorium on vacation rental permits:

[Housing Lopez](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to solving the affordable rental housing crisis on Lopez Island by developing dedicated, sustainable, affordable rental housing communities. We are community members and volunteers with expertise in this area who want to ensure that the island works for all of us. Construction of our first development project, which is a step towards addressing this crisis, is set to begin this spring. We anticipate that it will take some of the pressure off of our rental market.

Although developing new housing is critical to solving the affordable rental housing crisis, maintaining the existing supply of rentals is also a necessary part of the puzzle; the cost of replacing a lost rental is very high.

Research shows that short-term rentals draw away from the supply of long-term rentals and increase rental rates overall. In a trend that is expected to continue upward, more and more properties have been converted to short-term vacation rentals, which are more profitable, whereas Lopez's year-round population struggles to get by; many working families on Lopez are forced to move multiple times a year, live in substandard housing, or even leave the island behind. One islander we spoke to (a teacher, EMT, and firefighter) said that the housing situation will eventually force her to leave Lopez.

It is in the interest of all on our island — and in the county at large — to make certain that adequate, quality, affordable rentals are available to our workforce. These are the people who make this island work.

We believe that continuing the moratorium will provide needed time to pursue this as an avenue for making progress toward our shared values. We urge you to do so, and would be happy to discuss this issue in further detail. You can reach us at housinglopez@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

The Housing Lopez Board and Advisors

John Taylor, Barbara Schultheiss, Jeffrey Daggett, Richard Manderbach, Kay Keck, Angie Lausch, Linda Floodeen, Melora Hiller, and Doug Stevenson