

Erika Shook

From: Vicki Leimback <vleimback@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 8:08 AM
To: Council Public Comment; Lynda Guernsey; Erika Shook; Adam Zack; Mike Thomas
Subject: Revoke the Vacation Rental Moratorium

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February 22, 2021

San Juan County Council

Cc: San Juan County Planning Commission, Erika Shook, Adam Zack

RE: REVOKE the Vacation Rental (VR) Moratorium

Dear Council Members,

Hi, I'm Vicki Leimback and I am a VR owner on Orcas and a member of the Hosting on the Rock San Juan Islands VR Owners group. Our group represents owners and managers of short-term rentals across the islands. We are responsible, caring local and off island property owners who are dedicated to preserving our county's beauty and tranquility, while simultaneously supporting our local economies.

We act as ambassadors for our island communities, welcoming all our guests with rules of conduct and our expectations for their stay, including respecting our island environment. We encourage all of our visitors to patronize our local businesses - small shops, restaurants, and local artists. That hospitality is not limited to just the island our rental is located on, but to all the islands, the ferries serve; Orcas, Shaw, Lopez and San Juan. We support all opportunities for our guests to drop their dollars here!

Since 2017 our lodging tax revenue has contributed over 4 million dollars to our community parks, centers and organizations.

Vacation Rentals have been demonized for taking affordable housing off the market, detriment to the environment and over-tourism. There is NO DATA to support these accusations.

Actually, it's been shown the majority of vacation rental houses would never be rented, much less affordable rentals. Long term housing uses more natural resources being lived in for 365 days a year; whereas a vacation rental, which is rented seasonally or weekends in the off season.

A house that is short term rental uses less water, sewer and services than one that is a long term rental.

Community Planning and Development uploaded a report on their website on Feb 21st showing 626 permits that ARE compliant. Of that number —specifically 228 are inactive permits. ***The balance of 398 are compliant ACTIVE rentals for the entire San Juan County.***

There are approximately 360 Vacation Rental permits that are non-compliant according to Erika Shook. These permit holders failed to file their 2018 and 2019 reports. This makes these permits out of compliance and enforcement is needed. This should be the priority, not an onerous moratorium.

The pandemic has had a serious impact on our community and a moratorium does nothing to alleviate that. The priorities of the County Council at this time need to be helping the residents of San Juan County.

I believe they should be:

1. Making Covid vaccines readily available
2. Restoring health, viability and financial recovery of our community
3. The completion of the comprehensive plan

This focus on a moratorium will further delay and distract from the County's recovery.

The changes that were made by the Council in 2018 are working. Once they are enforced and if everyone feels more are needed, then let's have some public hearings to discuss the options.

I am asking that the Moratorium be revoked

Thank you Council,

Respectfully,

Vicki Leimback
Orcas

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Vicki Leimback

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