

Adam Zack

From: Ingrid Gabriel
Sent: Wednesday, July 14, 2021 9:20 AM
To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: FW: vacation rentals

From: Ruthie <wren@rockisland.com>
Sent: Monday, July 12, 2021 8:05 AM
To: San Juan County Council <councilvm@sanjuanco.com>
Subject: vacation rentals

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To: San Juan County Council
350 Court Street No. 1 Friday Harbor, WA 98250

From: Ruthie Dougherty
Email: wren@rockisland.com
Address: 136 Belle Lane, Olga, WA 98279

Re: Concerns about Vacation Rental Permits and Impacts of Vacation Rentals

Dear Christine, Cindy and Jamie,

You have difficult jobs as County Council members, and I thank you for being willing to occupy positions and grapple with issues critical to our island communities and their future.

I am adding my voice to those asking that you extend the moratorium on Vacations Rental permits.

I do not want to oversimplify the complex issues facing our county – and many others - but this one is straightforward and doable. Please take a breath, think this through, dig deep to understand the many implications of caving to unbridled profiteers.

For various reasons, our islands have become ultra-commodified over the last 15 years, and the intense activity around speculative real estate and tourism is way out of balance. You must see and feel this as well.

For the last 40+ years I have called the islands home - working, raising a family, contributing to community through volunteering, tending a home, being a good neighbor, and never taking the place for granted or balking at what some see as the “limitations” or “inconveniences” of island life. These days, going to town or visiting a park or preserve area is at best unsettling, and more often avoided. Island places are being consumed, overrun, even abused. I feel a growing sense of loss with accompanying sadness every day.

Of course this is not all because of vacation rentals, but it is, I believe, because people will not set or accept limits, and that is frightening on many levels. The relentless pursuit of “more, bigger, faster” may drive some vision of a thriving economy, but who is benefiting, and what are the true costs?

Please be wise and thoughtful as you address this in council. It is far easier to gently loosen regulations than it is to reign in a situation that is creating problematic consequences. Also, remember that while we are not be the high rollers, the rich and famous, the movers, shakers, and game changers, there are many wonderful long-time island folks out here who cherish our rural lives and love this place for what it is, not as a profit center or speculative investment.

Ruthie Dougherty
Olga, WA