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From: Lorna Reese <lornareese@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 17, 2021 8:49 AM
To: San Juan County Council; james@sanjuanco.com; Cindy Wolf

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Good morning,

I wholeheartedly oppose a 34% increase on vacation rentals and support freezing or lowering the current number as well as a ban on non-residents running vacation rentals. Here are my reasons.

Multiple studies have concluded that Airbnbs lead to gentrification. They increase rents and housing prices and drive out lower income communities.

Vacation rental owners who live off-island are profiting entirely at the expense of our island community. Many VR owners who live on Lopez do not rely on VRs as a primary source of income but rather as a way to make extra money for travel, etc. Lopezians who rent second homes or cabins as airbnbs could choose to provide year-round housing for locals and still make a sizable yearly income.

Children of aging locals who would like to move here to help caretake their parents cannot find housing. Young families are leaving the island due to lack of affordable housing. Even the new school superintendent must commute from Bellingham!

In 2020, the San Juan County Board of Commissioners commissioned a study to compare the San Juan Islands to similar

communities such as Aspen, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. The report concluded that in those resort communities, wealthy purchasers of vacation homes changed the character of the communities, raising rents and housing prices which eventually led to a mass exodus of modest income residents. The report also said that the similarities in size, scale, access, environment, and trends make the San Juans look just like Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard did 20 to 30 years ago.

<http://www.doebay.net/appeal/socioeconomicgrowth.pdf>

Lopez Island businesses do NOT want or need more tourism! Many local shops and restaurants can barely accommodate the business they already have and struggle to find workers. Some businesses have shortened their hours/days and most have help-wanted signs in the window. Last week, two village businesses closed down for a couple of days because they literally ran out of product!

Vacation rentals stress our fragile ecosystem, especially our rain-fed aquifers. VR owners are unable to monitor visitor water usage and garbage production, regardless of signs they may leave in rental units. According to surveys, local residents host visitors for an average of 2 weeks per year. Vacation rentals host dozens, sometimes hundreds, of visitors year-round and must wash sheets and towels and clean units after each set of guests.

Increasing tourism on the island has NOT improved the quality of life for local residents! Locals must now wait in line for over two hours for a Lopez-only ferry. Locals compete with tourists for island resources, including food and basic supplies. Lopez is not becoming more self-sustainable, but rather adapting to a wealthier clientele who demand all the same resources as a big city.

Please, please, please do NOT increase the number of vacation rentals. Thank you.

Love and blessings,

Lorna

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You are here to enable the purpose of the universe to unfold. That is how important you are. -
Eckhart Tolle

Lorna Reese

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I'm rarely online after 6 or 7 pm.