

## Adam Zack

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**From:** Elisabeth Robson <bethrobson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 14, 2021 12:00 PM  
**To:** Comp Plan Update  
**Cc:** Cindy Wolf; Jamie Stephens; Christine Minney  
**Subject:** Re: Comment on vacation rentals

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

I wanted to follow up my previous email to ask you and the County Council how you will change County planning goals and regulations based on the most recent IPCC report (Part 1, released last Monday), and the leaked draft of Part 3 of the IPCC report (due in March 2022) which states that:

"Global greenhouse gas emissions must peak in the next four years, coal and gas-fired power plants must close in the next decade and lifestyle and behavioural changes will be needed to avoid climate breakdown."

and

"The top 10% of emitters globally, who are the wealthiest 10%, contribute between 36 and 45% of emissions, which is 10 times as much as the poorest 10%, who are responsible for only about three to 5%... The consumption patterns of higher income consumers are associated with large carbon footprints."

Of course San Juan County citizens, and the tourists who visit, consist primarily of top 10% emitters.

Given that tourism, large homes, and 2nd homes are all top 10% behaviors, and that we will need to keep every square inch of undeveloped land we can to help maintain the biodiversity of the islands as biodiversity loss is an even bigger crisis than climate change, I'd like to know how the Council and the Planning Commission plan to address these issues.

I look forward to your response.

Thank you!  
Elisabeth Robson

On Sat, Jul 24, 2021 at 6:26 PM Elisabeth Robson <[bethrobson@gmail.com](mailto:bethrobson@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Planning Commissioners,  
Thank you for taking comments on the vacation rentals issue.

I am writing to suggest that we have a phased approach to lowering the number of all vacation rentals on all islands over a number of years, eventually (long term) to zero. This will need to coincide with a long term, concerted community effort to restructure the community away from being dependent on tourism.

I suggest this approach for two reasons.

First, we know from looking at other small communities that have become tourism-dependent that such dependency tends to destroy those communities. I could provide many examples; I'm sure you can think of your own. Those Alaskan communities destroyed by the cruise ship industry spring to mind. So unless we want to see the same happen to our community, we need another way forward.

Second, tourism is fundamentally unsustainable in a world facing the biodiversity, habitat, pollution, and climate crises we are currently facing. We know that 2-3 decades from now, we will be facing even more extreme weather, even larger waves of refugees, drought and clean water shortages, global and national food production crises, and so on. All of this is inevitable as global temperatures head towards +2C, pollution continues to skyrocket, key species (many we are dependent on) continue to decline and become extinct, and devastating mega drought desiccates Western states, especially those states where most of our food is currently grown.

Given these looming crises, it behooves us to begin looking beyond tourism as a way for people in this county to earn a living. Not only do we not want to contribute to these crises by encouraging more people to come here to impact precious resources like water and arable land we are desperately going to need in the coming years, but we are going to be in for a very rude awakening when tourism is no longer viable for any people except the ultra rich. If and when that becomes the case, if we continue down this path of tourism-dependency, then SJC will be a refuge only for the ultra rich, and citizens who live here now will be forced to migrate along with so many others to who-knows-where.

It's time to start working on a long range plan for this county that embraces these realities.

Thank you  
Elisabeth Robson, Lopez Island