

Adam Zack

From: Lynda Guernsey
Sent: Wednesday, August 18, 2021 8:30 AM
To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: FW: VR Caps

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From: Mary Gropp <marygropp10@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 4:20 PM
To: Lynda Guernsey <LyndaG@sanjuanco.com>
Subject: VR Caps

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Date: August 17, 2021
From: Mary Gropp, Orcas Island
To: San Juan County Planning Commission and San Juan County Council
Re: Establishment of fixed permanent caps on the total number of Vacation Rental Permits

Dear Members of the San Juan County Planning Commission,

Thank you for your prior support for a county-wide moratorium and the need to place limits on this commercial activity in mostly residential land use areas. Today we face a critical need to address the proliferation of vacation rental permits (VRs) in the County with hard numerical caps.

The fundamental purpose of a VR Cap is to help protect and preserve the nature of our county's residential neighborhoods, including our rural character, our fragile environment, and our cherished island culture. You have been given several strong proposals by people who have studied this issue thoroughly. I especially support the work of the Vacation Rental Work Group. [Janet Alderton](#) also presented a strong analysis of the data upon which proposed rental permit caps are based. I support her statements.

I also want to voice support for Vacation Rental permit caps from my own personal experience on Orcas. My family moved to Orcas Island in 1972, when I was still in High School. We ran a family business right in the middle of Eastsound. We were supported by the tourists that then frequented the island in the summer months, and were relieved when that trade subsided in September, and we got busy with other business of the community. My sister still runs that business and has struggled through lean years but been able to survive through developing a loyal customer base of both locals and visitors. Her business is now prospering, but she, along with so many island businesspeople and service workers, is exhausted, and overwhelmed by the sheer number of tourists that are present.

The level of tourism negatively affects my life in other ways. I have quit riding my bicycle, because our county roads cannot safely support the volume of speeding traffic and bicycles at the same time. When I drive into Eastsound in the early morning, the garbage cans on the street corners are overflowing with the previous days' visitor trash. In the past month our grocery store shelves have been sparsely stocked, and the workers weary beyond words, asked to service volumes of customers that the store is not able to support. Orcas Island does not have the infrastructure to support more visitors. I am not anti-tourism, or against VRs. But I am against allowing an uncontrolled growth of tourism that negatively impacts our community and our environment.

We are at a critical point. I hope that we will be wise enough to slow the growth of tourism by placing caps on the number of VR permits.

Thank you,
Mary Gropp, Orcas Island