

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** Alexandra Gayek <gayek07@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 16, 2021 10:28 PM  
**To:** Vacation Rental Comments  
**Subject:** Yes on VR caps

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To the Planning Commissioners:

I am writing to thank you and express support for the Planning Commission's wise August 20 decision to recommend both a county cap and island-by-island cap on the issuance of new permits for vacation rentals.

I think it's a great idea to base the cap on the number of active and compliant VR permits, though I do think we should balance the county load by gradually decreasing the number on Orcas Island and finding other places for increasing the number if it is to remain the same as it is.

This issue has been a vocal one for so long that I don't think there is merit to anyone complaining now that they were "counting on" being able to get a VR permit in the future. Plus, with attrition, someone in the future could still get a permit.

I think it's wise that you recommended not taking existing permits away from anyone in compliance, even though I wish commercial businesses were not allowed in residential neighborhoods. As there is attrition, I vote to decrease this kind of thing and move toward individuals running "cottage industry" type rentals--meaning part of a property is rented, with the owner living on site, without additional visitors or workers coming and going.

I'm not sure this entered into your decision making, but I'm very concerned that we may be in pandemic territory for the foreseeable future, and I've had way too many experiences of tourists not wearing masks and putting the lives of islanders at risk, plus increasing the level of stress here past the breaking point when we have no control over the influx of disease.

Thank you for recognizing the stress on our limited water, with prolonged drought, excess heat, and wells running dry this summer. I'm glad you understand that we need to put our attention on creating affordable housing, not using more and more of DCD's time dealing with an increasing number of VR permits--figuring out how to enforce the rules on more permits, dealing with renewals and applications.

I'm grateful you recognize the impact on our roads and neighborhoods, on strained medical services, a strained ferry system, and limited ability to generate power, because of ever increasing loads of tourists.

I'm glad you realize it's not fair for ever more individuals to sell our precious public resources for their personal profit.

I do understand the need for people who live here making a living, but we've got to rethink the larger design and impact of how we make our livings. We need to focus on building a regenerative economy, to restore

ecosystems damaged by development, to rebuild our communities and find jobs that give to the community instead of taking away.

Thank you for staying this course.

With appreciation,  
Alexandra Gayek  
Orcas Island