

From: [Larry](#)
To: [Council Public Comment](#)
Subject: Vacation rental moratorium
Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 4:55:40 PM

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the moratorium on vacation rentals on Orcas Island.

I am both a vacation rental owner, Orcas resident, and co-owner of a small vacation rental management business on Orcas.

Vacation rentals have become a lightning rod for a number of community issues that are very real, such as affordable housing. However, the easy target of vacation rentals is based more on emotion than on a careful data-based analysis of the root causes of the problems at hand.

I'm sure you will have real data on how far more vacation homes sit empty on Orcas than are rented out, and how if there were fewer vacation rental properties, most of us, myself certainly included, would not turn our homes into long term rental property, affordable or otherwise.

These additional homes would either sit empty, if we could afford that, or be sold to someone who could afford to have the home sit empty 50 weeks a year. Basically, you will create an island for either the very wealthy or those families who have received inherited property and live rent free on minimal income. Middle class folks such as myself will find it impossible to stay. Is this the intent of limiting vacation rentals?

More importantly is the negative impacts of not having vacation rentals. Here are the most significant:

1) I am 63 years old. I vacation rent my home 6 months a year and live in it full time the other 6 months. I could not afford to live in my home without the income it generates during those 6 months. Eventually, I will not vacation rent at all. But vacation renting is allowing me to keep my home and work towards living there full time. I am not alone in having my vacation rental provide the income which supports my living here. Without that, I lose my home.

2) Well paying jobs on Orcas are few and far between. My small business managing vacation rentals on Orcas pays a cleaning crew of 3 an average of \$50/hour (an average of over \$45,000 a year) in income, plus my own income. That is 4 well paying jobs ON THE ISLAND! A college degree not required. Working remotely, not required. Multiply that by all the other folks working in our business and you have at least 100-200 great jobs paying high wages, supporting local residents. If you plan on limiting or reducing these well paying jobs, please let me know how you plan to replace them?

In short, limiting vacation rentals will not solve the affordable housing problem.

Current regulations should be allowed to work and be strictly enforced against party houses and those rentals which disrupt neighborhood peace and quiet. In my experience (and I have quite a lot) the vast majority of vacation renters are folks like ourselves, looking to enjoy a quiet peaceful stay on our beautiful island, contributing to the local economy, and being respectful guests.

Sincerely,

Larry Bearg
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