

February 18, 2021

To: The Distinguished Members of the San Juan County Council

RE: Moratorium on the Issuance of Vacation Rental Permits

As a business on or in support of the islands in San Juan County, we are concerned about the recent moratorium that has been placed on the issuance of vacation rental permits and about the intentions for future further regulations. Tourism is a critical part of our local economy and, of course, of the survival of our business. The current moratorium, based on inaccurate and seemingly biased data (the biases and inaccuracies well documented by the many other letters you are receiving), sends a menacing message to those who have invested in supporting a community we all care about. We support the work the council has already done to thoroughly investigate this issue and the regulations passed in 2018. However, this moratorium and the future regulations being discussed, we feel, threatens to strangle the islands' economy and would likely bring financial distress to many who love and live here.

We all want responsible management of vacation rentals, but we also all enjoy the benefits provided by the businesses and support services that depend upon our tourists. We also value a spirit of welcome that is part of the charm of our communities. A moratorium and restrictive regulations that fail to actually address challenges in our community sends the opposite message.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that you rescind this moratorium, increase efforts to enforce the regulations thoughtfully put into place in 2018, and allow a balanced and nuanced solution to do its work.

Regards,

The Lower Tavern, Jim Passer, Orcas  
Orcas On-line, Stuart Baker, Orcas  
Orcas Island Film Festival, Donna Laslo, Orcas  
Island Sash and Door, David Oster, serving all the islands from Anacortes  
Buck Bay Shellfish Farm, Toni Knudson, Orcas  
Wildlife Cycles, Vicki Leimback, Orcas  
Salish Sea Yarn Company, Katie, Gaible, Orcas  
Drilling and Pump Service, Mark Sawyer, Orcas  
Orcas Home Contracting, Orcas

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Ray's Pharmacy, Orcas  
Con's Pit Stop, Orcas  
Crow Valley Holding, Inc.  
F & H Islands Holdings, Inc.