

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** Marianne Bryan <marianne.bryan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 10:56 AM  
**To:** Vacation Rental Comments  
**Subject:** Short term vacation rentals must be curtailed

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Dear Councilwoman Christine Minney,

I am writing to you as a property owner on San Juan Island. Our home on the island has been our personal vacation home since 2015 and our refuge during the covid pandemic, as well as becoming our now 10th grade daughters permanent residence as she is attending Friday Harbor HS. Our family has a long history on the island, as my husband's family first bought land for vacationing here in the 60s. His grandmother, Sally Bryan, then moved here permanently, and did her two daughters, who both became elementary school teachers on the island. We now have multiple cousins living on the island, as well as all four of my children's grandparents. We love so much about the island and the sense of community we have found here. I share this story with you because it shows how a family investing in a long-term vacation home (buy or rent) can then lead to long term residence and integration into the island community that then continues for generations.

In contrast, short-term rentals are by definition short-term and usually the clientele has little interest in more than a fun time with very little to no consideration for the community they are temporarily joining. In addition, due to their short-term nature, the short-term guests are not residents, which circumvents the protection of neighbors that are otherwise afforded due to state law requiring the registration of sex offenders and kidnapping offenders when they reside in an area. In our neighborhood, we already have one short-term rental property next door and another that has applied for a permit across the street. This means that during the months that it is nicest outside, my children are not really safe to be out in their own yard without supervision, as anyone (regardless of being a known sex offender, kinapper) who wants to rent the short-term rental is free to do so. Sure, this may not happen often, but there are zero protections in place should it happen.

In my opinion, short-term rentals should be classified as commercial lodging and not be allowed in residential neighborhoods. If a business would like to buy an entire neighborhood and get the land use for the area changed to commercial/lodging, then they may use the property as a business. At this point, the short-term vacation rental business has been propped up by county officers' willingness to turn away from the truth of the matter--these are not houses being used as residences; short-term vacation rentals are commercial properties being used for commercial purposes and should be constrained by zoning laws to areas that are not zoned residential. Simply limiting the number of short-term permits is a short-sighted and misguided attempt at fixing this increasingly obvious problem on our island. Rather, short-term vacation rental permits for less than a month should no longer be allowed in any area that is deemed residential. Vacationing for a short period of time does not qualify someone as residing in a home and therefore should not be permitted at all in residential areas.

In addition to the above argument against the allowing of commercial properties in residential zones, short-term vacation rentals take up valuable housing that might otherwise be used by people who plan to join the island community, either right away or as their circumstances change to allow them to live here full time. Property owners should have the right to rent their homes, but zoning laws have evolved for the purposes of safety and protection of values. Long-term rentals offer residents a place in a community, short-term rentals are the opposite, they offer visitors temporary lodging in an area where they have no intention of joining the community or considering the value of the community they enter for a very short-time.

Please, do what you can to convince the county council of the need to remove short-term vacation use permits (i.e. commercial lodging permits) from residential zones.

Thank you for your consideration of my viewpoint on this matter.

Sincerely,  
Marianne Bryan  
(she/her/hers)  
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