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To: Vacation Rental Comments

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I oppose vacation rental caps and restrictions.

In the late 90s the Growth Management Act was implemented to restrict growth and maintain affordability. It did not work.

The thinking was that by limiting the availability of smaller sized affordable property parcels while the demand for those parcels was high would somehow equate to housing opportunities for middle income families. It did not happen.

Simple economics...smaller parcel smaller price..bigger parcel bigger price.

In the early 2000s guest houses were the issue. The fear was that allowing property owners to have a guest house would somehow create negative impact and therefore must be limited in size and number.

So another shortsighted reaction to a problem that did not exist has constricted the availability of modest housing for middle income families.

Simple economics...smaller house smaller price...bigger house bigger price.

Historically on San Juan Island when the job market is good rentals are scarce...and when there are plentiful rentals jobs are scarce. Simple economics.

Our island economy has changed. When was the last time you saw a commercial fishing boat...or a log truck on the ferry...or a real farmer that could farm exclusively without having another job?

Our island economy is people.

That means tourism, the building industry, and the service industry. A lot of jobs for a lot of islanders who are already here.

So the thinking now is that limiting the number of vacation rentals will solve the long term rental shortage by forcing property owners to offer their properties to long term renters.

This will not happen.

Most vacation rentals are either too small for a middle income family...or too large. Big houses equal bigger rents.

And for property owners the simple economics of a vacation rental versus long term rental is less impact on resources, septic, wells, and property. Not to mention less stress and more peace of mind.