

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** laurarensberry@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2022 11:30 PM  
**To:** Vacation Rental Comments  
**Subject:** Vacation Rental Permits

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Dear San Juan County Council:

I am writing to ask that additional short term VR permits in San Juan County be halted. Where I live in the NW corner of the island there are several active permits. The people who rent these properties do not respect nearby private properties. Only one of these properties has water access but many of these "guests" find their way to waterfront properties, in particular Beach Haven Resort. They disrespect private property signs and access the beach because they clearly don't know better or care.

None of these homes have a bountiful water supply. I know this because I have worked in the well and water system industry for over 15 years. I know what their well logs say is available. I also know that most of these homes have failed bacteria tests in the past as I have been hired to sanitize these systems in order to achieve passing results. A sanitized system does not address that the well may be shallow and will almost always fail bacteria tests. This is fine for owners that are aware of the situation, they make the choice to drink or not drink the water. But there is nothing in the regulations that require vacation rental permits to test monthly or even annually. They do not have to disclose that they have a well that is shallow, contaminated, or salt water intruded. As far as I can tell, the home has to pass once in order to get the permit. This endangers the very young, elderly, and immunocompromised visitors. And they have no idea they are taking risks by drinking or bathing in this water.

Visitors should be housed in businesses that have water treatment systems or on group A systems that are chlorinated and tested monthly. True visitor lodging businesses are regulated and insured to protect their guests. Homes with VR permits do not protect their guests because they are not required to. Ultimately this is a liability for the County.

Vacation rentals use more water than the average single residence home. I manage several group A and B water systems. Homes with rental permits use more water on a monthly basis. These homes are often maximized in capacity and showers and laundry are also maximized. Do you wash all of your bedding and towels, and wash floors and bathrooms every couple of days as these homes turn over for the next guest? And all of this water use also maximizes septic systems. I also do not see that septic system monitoring is required of the permit holders. One home with a VR permit in my neighborhood has had a failing septic system since 2017. It has not been corrected and they continue to rent the property year round.

Lastly, I live in an area where fiber for broadband is not available. Rock Island has left a gap in service for the section of Enchanted Forest Road to West Beach Road. The people who reside in this neighborhood must use LTE. When the tourist season ramps up, internet speeds decrease significantly. These homes with maximized occupancy, and everyone with a phone, puts enough stress on the internet availability to severely impact those of us who work from home or make our lives that much more difficult when we want to relax and watch TV or go online.

Leave vacationers to legitimate hospitality businesses that are regulated, insured, and able to professionally manage the water, septic, internet, and behavior of people who have no interest in protecting our resources and livelihoods here. Just because someone is wealthy enough to buy a property here does not mean they can extract maximum utility from our resources and community. Most of us want a quite, peaceful, safe home here. Short term vacation rental

properties threaten that and the natural resources that make any of this possible. Please do not allow anymore of these permits. Neighborhoods all over Orcas are stressed because of them.

Sincerely,  
Laura Rensberry  
435 Beach Haven Rd  
Eastsound