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Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 10:01 PM
To: Vacation Rental Comments; Jamie Stephens
Subject: Comments on Cap on Rental Housing

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Hi Jamie and Fellow San Juan Council Members,

I wanted to take the opportunity to share my point of view as you consider permit caps on vacation rental housing. My wife's family lives on Lopez Island, has owned property there for over 30 years, and my wife herself has lived on Lopez as an adult at various times since she purchased property of her own in 2016. We are actively involved in the Lopez community, frequently participating in fundraisers and local events. I am not a real estate investor.

In 2019, we embarked on a major renovation project on what was a well loved but completely overgrown and worn-out house. We did this so we could enjoy the property for ourselves, but the ability to use it as a short term vacation rental motivated us to invest much more than we otherwise would have. Our project directly injected over \$900,000 into San Juan county - most of it invested in paying people: contractors, carpenters, electricians, drywallers, cabinet makers, plumbers, septic and geological inspectors, landscape architects, landscapers, delivery people as well as a mountain of business for the local hardware store. We turned our space into something we and our neighbors can be proud of, and something that allows us to share the magic of this amazing county with the wider world. Our house will continue to contribute money into San Juan County every year as our short term renters visit restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail spaces, and pay thousands of dollars of county sales tax on our rental revenue. We will continually pay local property managers and workers to clean and maintain the property, as well as pay higher property taxes based on the enhanced improvements short term rental allows us to make.

Our waterfront house offers many wonderful things, but one thing it never has been or will be in any scenario is low income housing. Capping or eliminating short term rentals does not help the housing situation, it would further strangle it as quality local jobs are eliminated and people invest less in the area. Low income housing is a critically important issue that the council should address, but this cap is not an effective technique. Rather, might I suggest the restrictive code limits on ADUs, yurts and tiny houses should be lifted so additional housing supply can be created to meet demand. I also encourage you to invest the thousands of incremental dollars of tax revenue my property creates for the county as a short term rental directly into subsidising more low income housing for those who need it.

Opposition to growth in principle is also misguided and arbitrary. To those who are opposed to change, to "keeping things the way they were", it should be pointed out that in the early 1900s the population of Lopez Island in the summer was more than double what it is today. Indeed, let us return to those good old days of a bustling economy, so that we can build the resources those who live here year round need and deserve. I'm happy when a restaurant is able to reopen, the community pool gets built, there is a new stand at the Lopez farmers market, or a new shop appears in town. Those developments improve all residents' quality of life, but need a tourist base to survive, and they in turn generate incomes that help residents pay for their own housing.

More barriers to short term rentals are not needed - the fact we are an archipelago and a ferry ride away from major population centers effectively inhibits unrestrained growth of short term rentals independent of any regulation. There is already an arduous, expensive and comprehensive permitting process that protects local residents and eliminates the

motivation for many to establish short term rentals who otherwise might. Construction costs are high here to begin with and astronomical in the current economic conditions, and our limited set of contractors are backed up for multiple years. I feel it is my duty to give voice to the next person who is in the middle of building their own dream that might have the current rules changed out from under them unfairly.

These new regulations are unnecessary, counterproductive, and callous. Please vote against them. Thanks for reading and considering my point of view.

Patrick Cassleman
Lopez Island