

Erika Shook

From: Cindy Wolf
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 2:52 PM
To: Ingrid Gabriel
Subject: Fwd: Statement for Moratorium
Attachments: County council-vacation rental moratorium.pdf

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From: michele Rodriguez <orcasproperty@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 2:36:41 PM
To: Christine Minney <christinem@sanjuanco.com>; Jamie Stephens <jamies@sanjuanco.com>; Cindy Wolf <cindyw@sanjuanco.com>
Cc: Ingrid Gabriel <ingridg@sanjuanco.com>
Subject: Statement for Moratorium

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Dear Council Members,

I have attached my statement for the record for the February 23rd council meeting.

Thank you,

Michele Rodriguez

Dear Council Members,

I am speaking today to address the moratorium that was placed on new vacation rental permits.

I have been a property manager, host of a vacation rental and cleaner for a vacation rental management company. My husband is a licensed electrician. We have been island residents for 20 years and have witnessed a huge transformation. Back then, working folks on the island complained about the low property tax and the huge amount of property that remained unused for most of the year and the effect it had on real estate and the ability of many to purchase a home. But most who came here to serve the tourist population and perhaps made this their full time home, could find rentals, if they tried really hard. It is nearly impossible now. We have watched tourists transform whole neighborhoods and use up island resources with seemingly complete detachment from the effects. Last summer, while stay home stay safe orders were in effect, we stayed home during hot days while tourists from hot spots wandered around maskless. Essential travel for locals to hospitals and Dr appointments was like planning for a spy mission.

The effects of over tourism and vacation rentals on tradesmen and women is also detrimental to working families and year round residents. My husband could work 7 days a week, 24 hours a day and still be busy. Year round residents tell him all the time how terribly difficult it is to get plumbers, construction workers, painters and other trades to respond to their calls. Obviously, there are more lucrative options. When our neighborhood tried to get a 7 house group paint contract to attract someone local we would have to wait at least a year. We are not angry with our local tradesmen and women. We know how hard it is to live in such extreme economic inequitable circumstances. This is what forced me to trade my conscience for my mortgage payment.

I urge you to keep the moratorium in place while looking for solutions that are sustainable and responsible. I fear that a flood of applications would have been placed, overwhelming both the county and our communities if permitted. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Michele and Richard Rodriguez of Orcas Island