

Sophia Cassam

From: rfrangooles <rfrangooles@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:46 PM
To: Council Public Comment
Subject: Vacation Rental Moratorium

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Dear San Juan Council Member(s),

I am writing to express my opposition to the recently enacted moratorium on vacation rentals.

To provide a little background. I am a lifelong Washington resident, with my mother having been born in Pateros (Eastern Washington) and my father moving here after being stationed at Fort Lewis during WWII. Anne, my wife, moved to Washington as a teenager and considers it her home.

We first started coming to San Juan island in the mid-1990's when first dating. Those visits have continued ever since, and our affection for the island is deep. Eventually we started bringing our children and they too have enjoyed the wonderful place that it is. Several years back we even had a large family reunion centered at Roche Harbor, where many family members took advantage of the rental properties there and nearby. So, while this has never been our home, we have always felt "at home" here.

Like many I suppose, we spent years daydreaming about living here, poring over the real estate magazines on our many hours on the ferries. As time went by, we purchased our own home in Bellevue, and began saving and preparing for eventual retirement. We were fortunate to purchase a rental home in Bellevue that we managed. We experienced the challenges of managing a long-term rental which, while not without benefit, clearly was not our cup of tea and we decided to move out of that business. We decided to leverage the equity we built to finally realize our dream of owning a home on San Juan island that we could eventually retire to.

Our plan was to enjoy that home when time allowed, but to offset the expense of having a second mortgage by entering it into the vacation rental market. We did our research, and while as in many places, we knew short term rentals were a hot button issue, we were shocked to see this moratorium enacted two days before our purchase closed.

While doing our due diligence in the lead up to our purchase we learned the county had, just two years prior, enacted new policy which provided significant guardrails ensuring that vacation rentals were well regulated and provided benefits to county residents through fees and taxes, generating tourist revenue and providing local employment. We had engaged with the San Juan Property Management Company to manage our home as we began preparing to submit for a rental permit. While the cost of using such a company is significant, we want to be responsible landlords and make sure we had a well-run property AND were compliant with the recently enacted rules. And to be clear, our home would never be entered into the long-term rental market, nor if it were, would it be considered "affordable housing".

The severe act of enacting a moratorium flies in the face of the work done in 2018 to better regulate the short-term rental sector. While we are sure that there is room to adjust what was accomplished in 2018, shutting down new applicants seems an over-reaction, a proverbial throwing out the baby with the bathwater. It appears driven by emotion and anecdote, rather than facts, data, and analysis.

We are new to the island community and look forward to establishing our roots here in the coming years. In the medium term we will evaluate our circumstance, but we must encourage you to reconsider and immediately retract the moratorium and move forward in a more measured fashion.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider our position.

Bob Frangoles and Anne Pace, San Juan Island

349 Shorett Dr, Friday Harbor 98250

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16806 SE 2nd Pl, Bellevue WA 98008