

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** Jerry Eisner <stardoc2@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 22, 2021 3:11 PM  
**To:** Council Public Comment  
**Subject:** Vacation Rental Moratorium

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Dear Commissioners

My wife Marilyn and I are writing to you regarding the moratorium going into effect on new seasonal rentals in San Juan County. We are hoping you will reconsider aspects of it, at least.

Our home in Olga has had approval as a seasonal rental from the county since August 2000. (00PROV073). We understand that we are currently not directly impacted by this new moratorium since we have no plans to try for another permit, and we have been in compliance with all rules enacted by the county since that time. We came to Orcas in 1975 when I became one of the doctors at the Medical Center (now the Lower Tavern) until May 1980. During that time we purchased our home in Olga. It would not have been financially possible to sustain ourselves in our own home without renting one of the two houses on the property to others during that time. Since we left, renting the house has been a means of sustaining the property for our family and for our personal use.

Many of us who rely on the seasonal rental system have strong bonds to the island community. In our family's case the maintenance of such a place is a matter of love. We enjoy providing visitors an experience of life in the islands that is unique.

Over the years we have been very aware of the difficulties faced by people who live full time on Orcas in finding long-term rental homes. During the first 22 years of ownership we rented our main home to others by yearly lease. We discontinued renting long-term as we got older and it became more difficult to keep up a home experiencing constant wear and tear. We now rely on seasonal renting. Our place is something we cherish and wish to transfer to our three children in the future. They in turn will need to rent it to others in order to afford to keep it.

We are concerned about a blanket seasonal rental moratorium and where this might lead in the future. While such a moratorium may symbolically seem to be an answer to the sense of urgency about available long-term rentals, the unintended consequences of this move may, in our opinion, create unnecessary financial grief to many,. This includes both those whose financial plans for retirement have included a seasonal rental, as well as those living full time in SJC for whom the moratorium is supposed to be helpful in finding stable housing.

Without going into detail in this letter, we simply urge you to review the terms of this moratorium and avoid damaging the finances and island relationships of those who have already invested a substantial amount of their personal wealth in homes in SJC, as well as an island economy that includes people who make their living running businesses, building and maintaining homes for others.

It is also important that there be a consensus rather than fiat, in finding solutions for these issues. We hope you will seek ways to have all issues on the table and that you produce compromise. It is simply not an answer to hamstringing one part of the island economy and expect the whole to do better.

Respectfully,

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