

Adam Zack

From: Steve Snowden <snow1157b@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 15, 2021 3:35 PM
To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: Fwd: We Support for Limitations on Vacation Rentals

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As suggested by Lynda's out-of-the-office message, I am resending this directly to vrcomments.

Date: 15 August 2021
From: Steve & Sarah Snowden, Lopez Island
To: San Juan County Planning Commission and San Juan County Council
Re: Establishment of fixed permanent caps on the total number of Vacation Rental Permits

We are writing to express our concerns over the proliferation of vacation rentals in San Juan County in general and Lopez Island in particular, and to support the letter (located at <http://doebay.net/VR/PCCCaugletter.pdf>) sent to you on 11 August 2021 from David Turnoy and others regarding the establishment of caps on Vacation Rental Permits (VRPs) in San Juan County (SJC). We have owned property on Lopez for 23 years and have been full-time residents for the last four years.

There are a number of problems concerning vacation rentals that the county must resolve to maintain the quality of life residents of the Islands expect, and nearly all are examples of where the benefits have been privatized to the owner (with some taxes going to the County) and the costs are borne by the rest of us. While all VRs must be considered, those without local ownership (without the owner residing on the property) are of the greatest concern.

- 1) Transit - The last year has painfully demonstrated that our ferry system is broken. With the aging fleet and the slow replacement schedule for vessels, the problems will not be solved for years. Allowing the number of VRs, and therefore the number of tourists, to increase will only exacerbate the pressure on the system.
- 2) Affordable Housing - The affordable housing market in the San Juans is also broken. While organizations such as the Lopez Community Land Trust are doing great work, many of the people vital to the health of our community continue to look for permanent housing. To the extent that VRs reduce the housing stock for seasonal or long-term rentals they are damaging our community. Further, the current real estate market is impossible. Since the start of 2020 the average sales price of property has increased from 10% over the county assessed value to 60% over the assessed value, i.e., the average sales price has increased by 50% affecting properties from inland lots to waterfront mansions. Home ownership outside of organizations like LCLT is not feasible for many.
- 3) Adverse VR Effects on Local Communities - There have been numerous reports of the deleterious effects of short-term vacation rentals on neighborhoods. Excessive noise, parking, trespassing, litter, and excessive water use all damage the quality of life for local residents. While VRs are supposed to have contact information available for complaints, this places an undue burden on the neighbors. In addition, any neighborhood with multiple VRs loses its cohesiveness and residential nature, to the detriment of the permanent residents.

To mitigate the effect of VRs, We support: 1) A cap on the number of VRs at the current permitted level. 2) Do not allow unpermitted VRs with strict enforcement. 3) Do not allow VR permits to convey with the property when sold. 4) Give local residents priority for obtaining VR permits. 5) Limit the density of VR rental properties.

Thank you for your consideration.