

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** joe symons <joesymons@me.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 3:03 PM  
**To:** Vacation Rental Comments  
**Subject:** Vacation Rental Permits / Freeze maximum number of permits at active and compliant level as of summer 2021

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As a ~50 year resident of San Juan County, I request that you respect and honor the decision made in good faith by the Planning Commissioners on August 20th, 2021, to freeze the number of vacation rental permits (VRPs) at the “Active and Compliant” number of 413 along with the associated island-specific caps.

Vacation rentals are high-traffic, high-turnover, public-facing business operations that enter uninvited and unwanted into our residential and community spaces. Consequently, they hold undeniable power to negatively transform a community forever.

I urge you to ensure that meaningful guardrails to protect our community from this unwanted intrusion be established.

San Juan County’s Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement emphasizes activities that are locally based and locally oriented; there is no provision in the vision statement that encourages regional or national consumption of island resources, amenities and experiences. San Juan County has experienced, along with virtually every other attractive rural venue in the world, the negative and unregulated impact of private for-profit short term space rental which in any other context would be described as micro hotels. No resident has an inalienable right to the personal benefits of a STR. STRs are a business; the record shows that these businesses have substantial negative

impacts. Current regulations do not adequately or appropriately address mitigations for these negative impacts.

As Planning Commission members, you are tasked with balancing private and public concerns. The public concern here is massive; the private “me-first” concern here does not represent the majority.

There is no data that supports the over-riding benefit of a large number of VRPs; there is plenty of data showing that VRP operations are causing substantial public expenses (whether fiscal or non-monetary).

The San Juans are not intended to be transformed to a playground for visitors and others. It’s time to bite the bullet.

Joe Symons

Olga WA

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[KeepSanJuansWild.org](http://KeepSanJuansWild.org)