

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** Carolyn McGown <carolyn@islandfields.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:00 AM  
**To:** Vacation Rental Comments  
**Subject:** If you must set Caps, Vote for Option C

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Hi,

Former vacation rental owner here and full time Lopez family for the past 8 years. Our two houses are located in Eastsound, where they sat on the market for almost two years before we bought them in 2018, for 20% less than they were listed for and not one previous offer had been submitted before us. Because of this, we didn't feel at the time that we were robbing another islander of the opportunity to purchase them. They were modern, densely built and no one else (who could afford them) seemed to have any vision for their value. We ran them as Airbnbs for three years. Then we switched to long term rentals over lockdown and haven't looked back, because frankly, STR's are a lot of work when you do the cleaning, laundry and yard work yourself, from another island.

That said, during the three years we were Airbnb hosts....

-we never had a complaint against us or a guest, however we had to call the sheriff several times because of our guests hearing fights, threatening language and middle of the night, violent eruptions from the long term rental on an adjacent property. The sheriff had to come and intervene in-person at least twice and there were multiple phone calls between ourselves and the sheriff in addition. In once instance one of our guests locked himself and his family in the bathroom when the long term renter came onto to property in a threatening manner.

**-Since switching from STR's to LTR's, our water usage has gone significantly UP.**

-We had a young family as long term renters for one year (at the start of the pandemic) and not only did all the utilities go sky high, but they left the house in horrid condition. We had to keep their entire deposit and itemize damages to get more. It took two weeks of cleaning to get it back into shape and as a result, we will not rent to families again, even though we will continue to rent LTRs.

-Even during our peak year, the houses were never occupied for more than 50% of the total days in the year. Long stretches in winter with no renters and even gaps during summer because we didn't want to rent for just 1 or 2 nights to "fill in the gaps".

-The income from these properties provides the bulk of the income for our family of four. We have daughters in the public school system here. My husband is on the parks board. I'm on two non-profit boards and am an active volunteer in many capacities. We donate money annually to many local agencies and institutions (including: the library, lopez rocks, community center, family resource center, the pool project, SJPT, the clinic, Housing Lopez, hospice, L.I.F.E., the PT clinic).

Although we enjoy having long term renters now, we feel that STR's offer a significant value to travelers, especially families. We have a daughter with a health diagnosis that made hotels untenable for our own family trips. Airbnb's allowed us to travel in an affordable and relaxing manner, all over the world. They are personal and connective. We feel

that STR's should be woven into the fabric of tourism in the SJI. I support option C, a moderate increase in the number of permits. We've also found other AIRBNB hosts to be responsible, rule-following and respectful members of the community who contribute to the fabric of our island society. *The limit on growth and visitorship needs to be supported by the Visitor's Bureau.*

Happy to talk to anyone about this, provide more specific numbers, utility bills, etc.

Thank you,  
Carolyn McGown