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To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: I support VR caps

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Hello,

I am writing to state my support for capping vacation rental permits. I won't belabor all of the arguments in favor of doing this - by now, you are all well aware of them.

But I do want to provide you with a reality check on at least one way these vacation rentals impact essential workers: My job is the HR Director for San Juan Island School District and a big responsibility of mine is recruiting new staff. Every year we have retirements, and resignations leaving essential positions that must be filled. In most cases the departing staff stay here, so it isn't like they move off Island and free up housing for the next teacher or para educator.

We are actively trying to fill 3 open positions for Special Education (SPED) teachers, for which there is extreme demand nationally. We have no one from our local talent pool to consider, so we know we need to recruit from off-Island.

We've found one experienced SPED teacher from Oregon who has accepted the offer and I've been doing my best to help her find housing, but nothing has worked out so far.

We've offered another position to an excellent applicant who will not accept the offer until she can secure housing. I'm also working closely with her in her search.

One more SPED teacher position remains and can only hope we can find the right person who will also accept the job and are able to relocate by September 1.

I now want to make sure you understand that the school district is mandated by Federal law to provide SPED services to all students who require them. 18% of our students require such services. This is well above state average, 14%. We cannot simply close doors, as sadly, so many business have had to do when they're understaffed.

In addition to SPED teachers, I'm also recruiting to fill 2 General Ed teacher, and 8 para educator positions, roles that provide essential support to SPED teachers, and are also legally mandated.

I'm working hard to think creatively, to recruit from our local talent pool, because I know it will be impossible to bring 10 newcomers to the Island and reasonably house them.

Education is the key to a healthy, thriving society and the school district is the heart and soul of the community.

Its clear that the owners' voices are the loudest and possibly most angry and aggressive in this debate. But when they speak, ask yourselves, are they arguing for the betterment of the community, the society or of their bank accounts?

I urge the council to grasp hold your north star - your guiding principals - and do not let go! You sit at this table to serve the betterment of the COMMUNITY not individuals or corporations. Every decision you make should derive from that ethos.

Capping vacation rental permits will stanch the drain of year-round housing and allow time for stakeholders to develop sound regulations to ensure the health of our community for generations to come.

Respectfully,

Cynthia McVeigh