

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** Lisa Capron <nwtrek@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 11:59 AM  
**To:** Vacation Rental Comments  
**Subject:** Vacation Rental Caps Comments

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Greetings,

Placing a cap on vacation rentals does not solve the housing shortage here in the SJIs.

Sadly, SJIs, like many desirable place to live are expensive places to live because they are so desirable.

While affordable housing is needed, property ownership and or a single family rental is not an entitlement. The majority of us should not have to shoulder the additional burden to provide single family rental to minimum income earners who haven't saved a down payment for a property and or can't afford a mortgage. Especially we should not be burdened to pay for housing for those who live here or move here to work in the tourism industry. The cost of developing that housing should come from a tourism tax or private apartment complex developers.

Additionally, there's been more than a few renters of single family home here on SJI that have caused significant damage to the properties they rented and cause the property owners significant financial harm that can't be recouped from the renter who caused the damage. Is SJI County going to assume that financial responsibility and reimburse property owners for the damage cause by renters of single family homes?

The housing shortages issue effects many states and cities across the country, not just here in the SJI. And we should be looking to see how other places resolve this issue and not just be taking a knee jerk reaction that appears to penalize people how own second homes and doesn't address the long term lack of housing.

Many of us have worked very hard and sacrificed for years to build enough resources to acquire property. Punishing us for those sacrifices so that those who haven't sacrificed, yet saved enough for a down payment on property, or can't afford a mortgage does not solve the issue of a lack of affordable housing or the rising cost of property in the SJI, because it a very desirable place to live. Everybody wants to live here, but historically, not everyone has financially and physically been able to live here, Because it's a difficult place to live and access from the mainland.

I come from SJI pioneer families and yet I couldn't afford to buy property on my own or rent a single family house here. I had to sacrifice and move off the island for approximately 30 yrs so that I could build enough resources to be ably to buy property and live here. It's a privilege to live here, not a right or entitlement.

Homes for islanders concepts are a great idea, but they should come with 'responsible use of public funds' and oversight. Using public funds (taxes) to build single family residences for the lower income who can then just turn around and sell them for a profit, even after 5-years, is just perpetuating and compounding the lack of affordable housing. Those residences are being sold at "market value" for the biggest profit possible. They are not being sold at a controlled profit. Why was/is that being allowed, why isn't there a cap on what those properties can be sold for if public

funds were used to build it and why aren't the beneficiaries of these public funded properties required to pay back the public in what it cost the public to build that residences, at the time of sale of that property.

As distasteful as I find it, the solution seem to be the building of mass housing apartment complexes with reasonable rents to house worker and those who need affordable housing. The most logical place is the county owned Friday West property off Beaverton Valley on SJI.

The downside to building affordable mass housing complexes are that it may entice even more individuals with minimum earning potential to move here and it may create even more undesirable social issues that already appear to be increasing here, i.e., crime, that usually follows that type of housing. But again, property ownership and a single family rental are not entitlements, regardless of the need for minimum wage employees and those that need affordable rentals. And why aren't all of the businesses benefiting from tourism in the SJIs required to help house their workers through taxation.

A solution is to rethink the logging tax and instead create a "tourism industry tax" that blankets the entire tourist industry (tour /wedding party companies/ car/bike rentals, transportation ect), and not just put the lion's share of the burden on 'over night logging' and or that limits or puts a cap on logging for tourism. As it stands, it appears that 80% of businesses operating in the SJIs and that are benefiting from tourism are not currently required to pay a tourism tax to offset the burden they are placing on the local population and to reimbursement us for the impact of tourism and the limited resources they are using while they benefit from tourism.

Most importantly the county needs to implement "responsible" use with oversight of that tourism tax revenue to off set the burden of tourism in the SJI and to build those mass housing complexes for workers.

The amount of that tax spent on tourism advertising should be significantly slashed and refocused to educate tourists on our fragile ecosystem, resources, and dwindling island culture. The limited marketing should stress zeros and low impact tourism. It really should educate the tourists who are visiting the islands about the islands and island culture. In no way should our tax dollars be used to make it easier for tourist or residents to get to the islands. There are plenty of place that tourists and folks can easily visit as Ms or live. The whole charm of a remote ferry service island is that it is difficult to get here and even harder to live here. Not everyone should or can travel or live here. If they could, it would loose it's unique charm and be no different than the mainland. Travel to and residency here here is not an entitlement, it's a privilege that comes with a sacrifice.

For example, tourist should be discouraged from bringing their vehicles to the islands and a portion of the tourist tax could be used establish low cost shuttles and or trollies that even locals could use (nothing should be free-period). Visitors could be educated with the concept of 'pack in/pack out' and how to lower their impact on our lack of adequate water, dumps/rubbish, infrastructure and roads. And how tire runoff effects local salmon and therefore the local Orca. They should be educated on how difficult it is to live here year round with storms, power outages, limited medical resources/special health needs services, lack of elder /disabled care, and disrupted ferry schedules that are all too common. They should realistically be educated that the SJIs are a remote rural area and they won't have all the amenities they maybe accustomed to or expect to receive when living on the mainland, i.e., internet/phone/cell services and access to the mainland.

I'm completely in favor of preserving open spaces and creating more parks but if they are just overcrowded with tourists and overflowing port-a-potties and garbage cans, how does that benefit the local population and our ecosystem. Additionally, while these preservations and open spaces help maintain the islands beauty and charm, they do not address the lack of affordable housing for workers and minimum wage earners. Nor does imposing additional burdens on property owners in the SJIs to offset the cost of tourism when most of us don't benefit from it, but are significantly burdened by it.

Please let me know how I can continue to be involved in finding solutions to help preserve the SJIs, and not just implementing short-sighted knee jerk reactions.

Thank you,

Lisa Capron

Sent from my iPhone