

## Sophia Cassam

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Jack M. Pedigo

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

July 14, 2022

As a member of the Friends of the San Juan's and very concerned resident of this county I am deeply concerned with the direction our country and county is headed.

Thank you for the extensive work you and DCD Staff have done on the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan Update. It is exciting that we have finally reached the public hearing stage of this process. While a collective sense of achievement and sigh of relief is warranted, it is important to keep in mind that there is still important work to be done before the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the County Council

Here are my comments:

Unfortunately, for many issues, too much time is lost by not looking at the bigger picture while spending too much time going over details. The Comprehensive Plan is a clear case in point. What makes these island Unique? What makes them so special that a lot of people want to visit and savor our lifestyles? Perhaps the major reason is there has been a balance between nature and human residents. But, as our numbers increase the balance is reduced. Make no mistake about it, by far, we are the most toxic, invasive species on the planet.

We need to take a serious look at not turning natural zones into more human development. Those who only come for a short visit do not contribute to the natural and social aspects of the community. Already, we are losing necessary critical workers because of the increasing workload and the unaffordability of basic housing. Also, the critical transportation means to get on and off island, the ferry system, is crashing and becoming unreliable often due to increasing stresses being placed on the aging fleet. The idea of a healthy environment depending on a strong economy is false. Our economy is completely dependent and limited on natural resources. Putting human economics over nature's economics is not only short-sighted but anthropogenic which will further misery and death. My late partner asked her 2<sup>nd</sup> graders what is more important people or dirt. Of course most of them got it wrong and, it seems, so do most adults.

The number one responsibility for our county commissioners is to preserve and maintain the critical natural LIFE (writ large) support systems. That is not just important for one species, ours, but a multiple of flora and fauna on this archipelago. If we can't even do what's right on a fragile, dependent island county what hope is there for the rest of the country? Our county planners have the unenviable, serious responsibility to preserve as much of the natural LIFE (writ large) support system as possible. Failing that basic connection between us and our dependence on nature is a dereliction of duty.

Jack M. Pedigo

Lopez Island, WA