

From: HISTRA Association <hornbyshortterm@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 8:48 AM
To: josie.osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Cc: northinfo; Arifin Graham; Angela Hudson; Donna Tuele; Eulala Mills; Karen; Karen Young; Michael Williams; Michelle Metzelaar-Easterly; Ray Therrien; Patrick Lui
Subject: A Request for Support in a Critical Issue for Hornby Island

Good Morning Minister Osborne:

We represent more than 80 legally operating Vacation Rentals on Hornby Island. Most of us are full or part time residents with deep roots in this community. We are the opposite of the 'Investor' Vacation Rental owners the Provincial recent legislation was designed to affect.

As you may know, on Hornby, in our current zoning bylaws, Vacation Rentals have a limited window for operation, May to September, host guests on average less than 10 weeks of the year, cannot rent to multiple groups in a single week, have limits on capacity and require appropriate signage and parking. They are well managed by current bylaws and do not remove housing from the community. What you may not know is that our Local Trust Committee is considering changes to these bylaws that, combined with the new Provincial law, could end ALL vacation rentals on Hornby Island. This will devastate our community – residents, workers, artists, food services, businesses and the community members who use short term rental to keep and maintain their family properties.

Our members, combined with those who have not yet joined our Association, and our guests, annually contribute more than \$4 million to the local economy as well as 75% of the expected \$50,000 or more in direct funding that supports affordable worker housing, through Municipal & Regional District Tax Program (MRDT) funds. Many here depend on Vacation Rental visitors for their livelihoods. Removing the Vacation Rental contribution to our island will be the equivalent of removing 20% of our workforce's average income.

Vacation Rentals on Hornby are offered by a mix of full and part time residents; more than 90% say they are homes not investments. We are not the 'commercial' investors the provincial regulations are aimed at removing. We are residents who use a currently legal property right to stay in our homes in the face of rising costs.

As we are sure you are also aware, we have a seasonal and project-based workforce that need to be housed while they work on the island. These are often 4 to 8 week projects, and, because they have not been 'short term', have been allowed throughout the year. Hornby, like other rural and remote islands, relies on these temporary housing arrangements to keep its economic and workforce engines running. The Provincial changes to make rentals below 90 days 'short

term 'along with our current bylaws limiting short term rentals to May to September means that this would not be possible starting next year, creating real hardship for our community and all of its citizens

We strongly support the requirement for Vacation Rental registration and the enabling of Regional Districts to provide business licensing. This is an important change that will create transparency for Vacation Rentals on Hornby and throughout the province.

We also understand there is a need to return some housing to long-term tenure. However, we strongly urge you to reconsider the changes to legal non-conforming use principle. Unlike in urban areas, homes no longer allowed to offer Vacation Rentals will not create long-term housing on Hornby. Most owners live full or part time in their properties, so these homes are not available for long term rental. Many are 'family legacy' properties, having passed through two, often three generations. These families use Vacation Rentals to enable them to remain in the community. If forced to sell, most of these properties will become rarely used vacation properties, which will not create any housing. On Hornby, 95% of Vacation Rentals say they do so to pay their, largely unreduced, property taxes, 82% to allow them to support more local stores and business. More than 90% report they will not become long-term rental properties if the Vacation Rental option is closed to them.

The MRDT, added to Vacation Rentals on Hornby in 2022, provides regular and annual funding that supports affordable worker housing on Hornby. That was our main purpose in joining the MRDT program. Information about these visitor paid dollars shows that the currently operating Vacation Rentals, contribute 75% of the \$50,000 a year that will support the work of creating, expanding and maintaining affordable housing in our community. If Vacation Rentals can no longer operate that will drop to around \$10,000 and seriously damage the efforts to address our community's pressing housing needs.

We would like your help and support for three things:

1. 1.Support a refinement of the change to the Legal Non-Conforming Property rights as follows:
 - a. Revise the changes to legal non-conforming rights to have them end when the property is sold at arm's length.
 - b. This protects the current family, who have operated in good faith and according to the laws, at the time a property use change is implemented. It also ensures that governments at all levels can affect a policy shift in housing with legal non-conforming rights no longer continuing in perpetuity with the property.
2. Support the CVRD in quickly establishing a licensing program that will allow new and existing Vacation Rentals on Hornby to be licensed through an administrative process with transparency.
3. Support our request to the Local Trust Committee that at their December 13th LTC meeting they:
 - a. Allow currently legally operating Vacation Rentals to continue

b. Enable a count or registration process soon to determine how many there are, their capacity and how often they operate to inform changes to our Official Community Plan

c. Establish a cap on the number of Vacation Rentals at 10-15% above the number that are legally operating now.

We close with this: Vacation Rentals are the core of Hornby's vacation history and future and these property owners are deeply rooted members of our community. They contribute millions to our isolated economy and enable 100's of families to remain on our island. Ending them on Hornby, as is possible right now, will displace many many families and will not create the affordable housing we need. We urge you to help our community to resolve this challenge in a way that strengthens and heals our island and supports us to focus on creating and expanding urgently needed, locally appropriate, affordable housing. We would be happy to meet in person or on Zoom to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

The Hornby Island Short Term Rental Association (HISTRA) Board (www.histra.ca)

Michael Williams, Patrick Lui, Eulala Mills, Arifin Graham, Michelle Easterly, Donna Tuele, Karen Young, Angela Hudson, Ray Therrien, Karen Ross.