

**From:** [Council](#)  
**To:** [Barbara Brenner](#); [Barry Buchanan](#); [Rud Browne](#); [Satpal Sidhu](#); [Timothy Ballew](#); [Todd Donovan](#); [Tyler Byrd](#)  
**Cc:** [Becky Boxx](#); [Matt Aamot](#); [Mark Personius](#)  
**Subject:** FW: a VRBO Proposed Regulations and Comment on SMP Amendment in Whatcom County  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 08, 2018 8:36:06 AM

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**From:** Sally Harper [mailto:[sjharper@aol.com](mailto:sjharper@aol.com)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 07, 2018 11:30 PM  
**To:** Council  
**Subject:** Fwd: a VRBO Proposed Regulations and Comment on SMP Amendment in Whatcom County

Dear Whatcom County Council Members,  
In preparation for your meeting on August 8th about VRBO regulations in Whatcom County, please take a look at these concerns as you discuss approval of the VRBO and BNB regulations for our Whatcom Water Watershed and new Shoreline Management Act rules. Thank you for your consideration,  
Sally Harper

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "[sjharper@aol.com](mailto:sjharper@aol.com)" <[sjharper@aol.com](mailto:sjharper@aol.com)>  
**Date:** January 28, 2017 at 2:19:29 PM PST  
**To:** [council@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:council@co.whatcom.wa.us)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Comment on SMP Amendment in Whatcom County (open comment period)

Dear Jack Lowes and Council Members,  
Please read my following comments to the Department of Ecology regarding your proposed amendment to loosen SMP restrictions on Lake Whatcom. Thank you for your time.  
Sally Harper

-----Original Message-----

From: [sjharper](mailto:sjharper@aol.com) <[sjharper@aol.com](mailto:sjharper@aol.com)>  
To: [chad.yunge](mailto:chad.yunge@ecy.wa.gov) <[chad.yunge@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:chad.yunge@ecy.wa.gov)>  
Sent: Sat, Jan 28, 2017 1:58 pm  
Subject: Comment on SMP Amendment in Whatcom County (open comment period)

January 27, 2017

Chad Yunge  
Department of Ecology  
1440 10th Street, suite 201  
Bellingham, WA

Dear Chad,

Thank you for taking comments on the proposed Amendments from Whatcom County Council to its Shoreline Master Program, regarding use of Single Family Residences as Short term Vacation Rentals.

I am shocked and dismayed at this idea of loosening any of the ecological protective laws that currently protect the watershed areas in Whatcom County. As you know, Lake Whatcom is the drinking water source for over 100,000 residents in Bellingham and Whatcom County.

The Shoreline Management Act took years of effort to create and put in place. It has been a good thing to protect all of our water resources in Washington State.

I've spoken with the Huxley College Institute for Watershed Studies, and studied their research on the degradation of Lake Whatcom.

The research and pollution measurements are clear that "people" are the biggest polluters of Lake Whatcom.

It makes no sense to encourage or allow more recreational use of Lake Whatcom thru allowing more VRBO's on the shorelines by allowing this amendment to the SMP.

In a short few years, the numbers of VRBO's on Lake Whatcom increased from 13 to currently 40 VRBO's listed online for rent.

This is when VRBO's are still currently "illegal". How many will flourish if the Department of Ecology grants it's blessing.

When will the citizens of Bellingham wake up to this problem of Whatcom County selling out the Lake for profit? Are you aware that some of the listings on VRBO Lake Whatcom charge \$695.00 per night? VRBO's are VERY BIG BUSINESS! Canadian investors already own many of these Commercial businesses on Lake Whatcom. This will only increase.

Changing the "commercial use" verbiage to "residential use" is only a veil, and misrepresents what is really happening. Many of the popular areas on the Lake Whatcom are looking more and more like Birch Bay, with large groups of friends and families, with extra ski boats and jet ski's that are being launched on site. It goes without saying that this commercial use, involving intensive nightly summer party activity is different than existing single families. Most all of these homes have septic systems designed for 6 people.

The Department of Ecology must realize that research would easily show a negative cumulative impact on Lake Whatcom's water quality from loosening any current restrictions. A good example is the map of where the Asian Clam populations are growing. These match exactly all the places where there is more public or intense use by people on the lake.

Furthermore, just last April (2016), I was pleased to read that the Environmental Protection Agency gave \$50 million, under the Clean Water Act to Whatcom County and the Dept.of Ecology to work on cleaning up the phosphorus in Lake Whatcom. What? Doesn't this amendment seem like a contrary proposal? Whatcom County wants to amend the SMP which will allow increased pollution of the very same water, you and they are mandated to clean up? I wonder what the EPA would say to this conflict.

As there are currently almost 2 VRBO's for every mile of Lake Whatcom shoreline, I recommend that Ecology increase protections for the lake, not loosen them. At the minimum, please use your wisdom and science to direct Whatcom County to enforce existing SMP codes and crack down on these polluters and lawbreakers. When will Ecology become concerned? When there are 200 VRBO commercial, recreational establishments on the Lake Whatcom? Business interests should not win over science. Who else will protect Lake Whatcom, if not Ecology?

Thank you for taking my comment into consideration,

Sally J. Harper  
Resident of Whatcom County