

January 20, 2022

To: Sonoma County Planning Commission re: Airbnb

From: Caroline Simon/Richard family, Airbnb host in Sonoma County

Dear Sonoma County Planning Commission,

We inherited our parents' ranch in Sonoma County in 2017. It is a beautiful property to which we are deeply attached, and a very expensive one to run and maintain.

We are not independently wealthy. The only way we can keep our family property is to make it pay for itself. There was a lot of deferred maintenance, and costs have risen dramatically since 2017, particularly for property insurance and wood. We have been able to accomplish this mostly because of the income we have received from making the farmhouse on the property available for part-time rental on Airbnb. The fact that Airbnb makes part-time rental possible also means that our family members can stay in the farmhouse for family occasions and vacations several times a year, and renew our friendships and feeling for Sonoma.

The reviews we have received on Airbnb have been glowing. We believe that being able to place our family farmhouse up for rental on Airbnb has given guests from all over the world (from Australia, the UK, and Israel, as well as across America and the Bay Area) a chance to get to know and appreciate the richness of Sonoma in a unique and lasting way that appeals to many families. We planted a small orchard in the farmhouse garden with a variety of Luther Burbank fruit trees, to showcase the bounty of our rich agricultural history and land. We give our guests wine made from our vineyard and send them for tours to visit nearby wineries. We believe this is also good for Sonoma County.

We are pleased to observe strong, sensible regulations. And we hope that we can continue to make our family farmhouse available for part-time rental, which would enable us to keep the property in our family, to stay there frequently, and be ambassadors of Sonoma to visitors from around the world.

Sincerely,

Caroline Simon

