

**From:** [Lina Blanco](#)  
**To:** [Gary Helfrich](#); [PlanningAgency](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony: Vacation Rental Ordinance  
**Date:** March 17, 2022 12:11:07 PM

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## EXTERNAL

March 17, 2022

Commissioner District 1 Cornwall  
Commissioner District 2 Gilardi  
Commissioner District 4 McCaffery  
Commissioner District 5 Grady  
Commissioner District 3, Ocana Chair

cc:

Scott Orr, Deputy Director  
Gary Helfrich, Staff  
Chelsea Holup, Secretary  
Jennifer Klein Chief Deputy County Counsel

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

My name is Lina Blanco and I live in District 5 in unincorporated Sonoma County.

As a lifelong renter and member of the Sonoma County Tenants Union, I'm offering my public testimony today on behalf of the thousands of Sonoma County renters who were not included in your research and workshopping toward a new Vacation Rental Ordinance.

As a renter in this county, I have few protections that ensure my right to affordable, stable housing. It is hard to find housing as a renter in Sonoma County and I'm concerned that without a limit, more of my neighbors will be forced into displacement.

Unlike homeowners and homeowner associations, the only avenue I have to voice my concerns is through the collective power of our tenants' union and by submitting public comments like this.

I'm not here to threaten anyone's right to a dignified retirement. We have so many elders who are renters in this county, that no one is looking out for. Low-wage workers and unemployed elders who never had the opportunity to save for retirement are often at risk of becoming unhoused.

Permit Sonoma has the responsibility and authority to limit vacation rentals and prevent investors and businesses from buying up what housing stock we have here. High rents and fees will continue to squeeze tenants – often taking well over a third of our paychecks every month.

Several other local jurisdictions have adopted limits that prevent abuse and misuse of rental units. I urge you to consider a solution like:

- Establish a vacation rental moratorium as we endure another year of fires and a pandemic.
- Call it what it is: a business – and require business licenses limited to 1 home.
- A permanent cap: Set a limit to prevent future units from getting flipped into vacation rentals.

- A permanent resident requirement: Require rental units to stay occupied by residents.
- Allowed in commercial zones: Prevent rentals from reducing housing stock in our communities.

Fires will return. The pandemic's impact will push more renters like me to the edge.

Lastly, I urge you to meet with unhoused advocates and tenant advocates before proposing any ordinance. Solely meeting with homeowners and vacation rental advocates is absolutely inadequate.

Sincerely,

Lina Blanco

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Lina Blanco  
+1 253 347 5130  
[leblanco.design@gmail.com](mailto:leblanco.design@gmail.com)

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