

From: [Mary Gillespie](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: Airbnb host
Date: March 17, 2022 9:24:57 AM

EXTERNAL

Dear Planning Commission,

1. I am an Airbnb host in Guerneville at 17325 Riverside Road. My hosting has added to the community. When I bought my cabin it was run down, not habitable and I have been told by neighbors that it was used by drug people and the front yard was a junk yard. Well I bought it and made it beautiful, adding to the neighborhood. I have been a good host; my cabin is only 2 bedrooms and I cap guest to 4 people so I don't have parties at my place, just nice people who want to visit the area. I did not take housing away from anyone.

2. When I fixed up my cabin I hired a local contractor and crew from Guerneville, my floors were put in by the local flooring company (the previous floor had holes). I must have contributed over \$100K in work to the Guerneville and surrounding Sonoma County Community. My guests usually frequent local restaurants, stores and shops and I am sure they also contribute greatly to the community. The taxes I pay as a host also support the community, although I don't have a say in where they go. I know from Facebook that there are many in the community who blame vacation rentals for a myriad of problems. It would be nice if the tax money was used to alleviate some of these problems and this us against them mentality. Here is what I gathered regarding the taxes-

"The Transient Occupancy Tax (Hotel, Motel, Campground or Bed Tax) is authorized under State Revenue and Taxation Code Section 7280, as an additional source of non-property tax revenue to local government. This tax is levied in Sonoma County at a rate of 12% for accommodations at lodging and camping facilities in the unincorporated areas of the County. TOT funds are discretionary, in that the Board of Supervisors MAY DIRECT USE OF THESE FUNDS FOR ANY LEGITIMATE COUNTY EXPENSE. The tax code does not require any specific use of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) funds." (Emphasis added)

3. My suggestion is that instead of capping the number of vacation rentals, you first try to get the anger out of the community by using that tax money for something they want in addition to hotel and wine advertising. Let the community know you will fix roads, open schools, pay for local fire services, etc... and that the hosting community is contributing through the occupancy tax. Giving the community an understanding of how the occupancy tax could work to their benefit may alleviate some of the ill will to the host community and guests. (In my neighborhood, the residents treat me and the guests well, but Facebook tells another story.)

Thank you,
Mary Gillespie

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