

Donna DePamphilis

From: Merry Bush <merryb@rockisland.com>
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2017 6:16 PM
To: Ingrid Gabriel
Subject: Population Projection Comments from Merry Bush, Orcas Island

Merry Bush
423 Peapod Lane
Olga, WA 98279

Full-time resident of Orcas Island for 19 years.

I began visiting Orcas Island in 1974 and moved here as a full-time resident just short of 20 years ago. I am very disheartened by the lack of reasonable planning done by anyone for these Islands!

In my opinion, depending upon a tourist economy is the worst thing that we can do as it continues to exacerbates the damages being done to the irreplaceable natural environment and the Island society! Tourism exaggerates the income disparities and brings the rich here to build their trophy homes which are used perhaps one week per year! Year round rentals have disappeared and vacation rentals have taken over. In our neighborhood alone we have five vacation rentals. The people who rent these home couldn't care less about the Islands or the culture here. They want to chase whales around, party, wash their cars, and shoot off fireworks... I know this sounds dreadful but I have been watching them for years! I volunteer at the Orcas Food Bank and when the tourist businesses open and hire their summer help, we see many, many of them in line at the Food Bank. There is just something wrong with a society that has such a low opinion/value for workers!

Well, that my gripe. I do truly believe that Joe Symons is the only person doing worthwhile work on the population projections. I see so many people simply throwing their hands in the air and saying there is nothing that can be done. I don't believe that is true.

To my mind, the worst part of depending on tourism means that we residents need to pay to build infrastructure for twice our population which, in reality, is only needed for several months. This added expense benefits the few people on the Islands who depend upon tourism for their livelihood. I don't know why they shouldn't bear the burden for that extra infrastructure. It is a business expense which they have been able to put off on the full resident population and that is clearly unfair!

If you have any questions regarding the foregoing, please feel free to contact me via email or telephone 376-6804.