

Joni Tomlinson

115 West Old Cascade Highway,

Skykomish, WA 98288

October 11, 2019

Mayor Henry Sladek

Town of Skykomish Council

RE: Short-Term Rentals

I have skied my entire life at Stevens Pass and a few years back, and since we were finally retired, decided to buy a ski cabin strictly for our personal use. We checked out Index, Skykomish, and all housing located close to Stevens Pass.

We have always loved Skykomish and have many years of history here. My hubby was in a band back in the 70's and played at the High School and also played on the balcony of the old hotel. My family regularly stayed at the hotel during our family ski trips to Stevens Pass. For these reasons and because we were looking for a sense of community, decided to settled in Skykomish and preceeded to buy a property.

This was no ordinary property however. It was completely derelict and had been abandoned for several years. It had been flooded in every way possible and was nearly considered a tear down. The property was so beautiful, we just had to buy it and see what we could do. You could hardly see the house as the property was so over grown. On our first Halloween, we had lots of kids come to our door. As we handed out candy, we overheard kids excitedly saying "oh look Mommy, it's a haunted house!!"

We have worked endlessly on our property and also work very hard on being good neighbors. We have made friends here. We have gotten to know all our neighbors. We have used all the services offered here. The deli, the restaurant, the hotel for overflow of family visiting, the gas station, the cascadia café, the library, the laundymat, taken train rides (always leaving a tip), used the foodbank (love that service), and visiting the museum which we have purchased books and puzzels from.

We have hired many locals to provide services to us for house cleaning, yard maintenance, snow ploughing, and tree removal. We even prepared a huge meal to include fresh caught crab to our local fire department. We buy raffle tickets, attend local activities, and even had my car in the car show during tunnel days. I say all of this to let you know that we are invested in the heart of this community and want to help keep it sustainable.

After about a year of being here, we realized we can't always be here. We have grandbabies spread out in different countries to go visit, boating on the sound, and a beach house that we also love spending time at during the summer. We also realized how very proud we were on what we accomplished with this property and wanted to share it.

My son, told me about Airbnb. For those of you that don't know about Airbnb, it is a community of people that are either hosts or guests with a belief of caring for the property as though it were your own. When your stay is complete, both sides review one another. There are very strict rules that must be agreed on before a guest can even be approved to rent. Following house rules is essential and if they get a bad review, this could blacklist them from ever using airbnb in the future.

We really liked this model because it fit with our sense of community and wanting to be a good neighbor. It was a little bit of a learning process but after several years have proven to work well for us. I have earned the distinguished recognition as a super host. I have attached the stringent requirements for becoming a superhost. It is not taken lightly.

The next step in setting up our property to avail itself as a rental property was to understand the governing rules of the IRS and how this will change our tax return. I have attached only the IRS instructions on self-employment tax as it relates to rental properties but any of you can go to the IRS website for this information. Rental properties are not considered a business so therefore not required to pay self-employment tax. We were not required to get a business license. The only requirement was to report your rental income and related rental expenses which, by the way, is provided to us from Airbnb. For this reason, we dispute a requirement to hold a license as a business as the Federal Government has already established that we have not created a business.

This is all very long winded but felt we needed to provide this background to get to the point of what you are trying to accomplish as a town as they relate to short term rentals. We feel like we have helped the community significantly by:

- providing jobs to locals

- using local business and services

- cleaning up a derelict property

We also want to point out that if you feel the need to regulate us, you will need to hold all the residence of our beautiful mountain town to the same high standards. While we take pride in keeping our home and landscaping maintained and continue to make improvements, we don't see the same pride as our neighbors. The added benefit of renting our home on occasion, is that it affords us the ability to continue to make improvements. In addition, while we make sure our property is safe as is another rule from Airbnb, we don't see that same standard practiced by certain neighbors. I guess what I am saying is, don't ask anything of us that you are not willing to ask of all the residences.

In response to your concern about us being over an hour away (we are an hour and 15 minutes away), we have a wonderful team of locals that respond very quickly on our behalf if the need arises. Fortunately for us, the need doesn't arise very often because, as we have worked through the bugs, we are determined to make our home a trouble free home with back ups to our back up systems.

Finally, we personally believe that the less government is involved, the better. It is one of the things we have cherish about this little town of Skykomish. Sure hope we don't lose what we have here.

If you have read to the bottom of this letter, Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan (Joni) Tomlinson