

Dear Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Commissioners,

We respectfully request an amendment to the current restrictions on Short-Term Vacation Rentals (STVRs) within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Our family previously operated a highly successful STVR property, and we have seen firsthand the positive impact these rentals can have on local communities.

For several years, our property brought in nearly \$10,000 annually in local and state taxes, directly supporting essential services and infrastructure. Additionally, we employed five local residents at a living wage, supporting the community's economic health. Prior to the rule change, there were at least 10 similar homes providing both income and employment opportunities, all of which contributed favorably to the local economy.

During the challenging pandemic years, our home hosted visitors that helped sustain local businesses. Multigenerational families, many with mobility differences, were able to experience the Gorge for the first time because our home and other STVRs offer a type of accommodation they needed to make their trip possible.

However, under the recent amendment to the rules, STVRs were eliminated from Small Woodland F-3(20) designated properties and others. Established STVRs were not granted grandfather rights or given a way to continue operating legally. This change has significantly impacted us, as well as others who previously operated successful vacation rentals in the area, which had detrimental financial repercussions on homeowners. Meanwhile, Urban Area properties, which were permitted to host STVRs, have seen an increase in noise and parking complaints, while our operation—free from any complaints or emergency calls—has been forced to shut down.

Some scenic area visitors prefer STVRs as they meet their personal needs. The restrictions have inadvertently shifted STVRs into small-town and urban residential areas, further exacerbating the affordable housing crisis by displacing much-needed long-term rental properties. This has created additional strain on local housing markets, making it harder for residents to find affordable homes. Business owners continue to struggle to find local, reliable employees; there are too few homes and rentals in urban town centers to support the employment needs of local businesses. Longer commutes increase daily traffic demands on our busy local roads and increase pollution in the Gorge.

We urge you to reconsider and amend the current regulations to allow STVRs in Small Woodland zones. In addition, we propose the introduction of a fair and reasonable STVR fee payable to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. This new fee could help offset the budgetary shortfalls resulting from recent funding cuts, ensuring that the region continues to thrive without sacrificing its unique charm or environmental integrity.

We believe that by carefully revisiting these restrictions, we can strike a balance between preserving the beauty of the Gorge and allowing responsible, community-supporting short-term rentals to continue to benefit the area.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We respect the difficult decisions you have to make and the vital service you provide to the Gorge. We look forward to future engagement opportunities about this matter.

Sincerely,
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