

A LETTER FROM THE PENDER ISLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

To the Islands Trust,

The Executive Board's response to the Islands Trust News Release regarding Judgment against Robert Leslie Conconi (Defendant) by the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee (Plaintiff) is as follows:

"Pender Island's economy is dependent on tourism. The Chamber represents over 100 businesses, many of whom rely on tourism to support them.

Short term vacation rental is an activity that has been an accepted practice on Pender Island for over 50 years. It has provided vacation accommodation for families who find that B&Bs and resorts do not suit their needs.

We have been under the impression that vacation rentals are a legal use:

In 1999 a brief prohibition against short term vacation rentals was introduced to restrict short term rentals but was subsequently removed in 2000.

A letter from the Chair of the Islands Trust in July, 2003 stated that "We understand that land use regulations on North Pender Island currently permit vacation rentals and that your Local Trust Committee does not have plans to change the existing regulations."

One of the current trustees has stated in previous campaign literature that "I believe the use of property and homes as short-term rentals (for periods of less than 30 days) is a legitimate commercial venture".

Our neighbouring San Juan Island has always supported and encouraged short term vacation rentals as a way to develop tourism and promote the island's economy. The San Juan Chamber has asked that tourists be redirected their way if we cannot welcome them on our islands. That is a sad state of affairs.

The decision regarding The Timbers involves a large operation that is not similar to single family home vacation rentals, so we do not know how this decision will affect other vacation rental owners. In regard to the Trust News Release about the decision, we note that it is misleading as South Pender Island bylaws specifically permit short term vacation rentals.

Carol Budnyk, President,
On Behalf of the Executive Board,
Pender Island Chamber of Commerce