



OLYMPIC PENINSULA LODGING ALLIANCE

PRESS RELEASE

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OLYMPIC PENINSULA LODGING ALLIANCE LAUNCHED AS PORT ANGELES SHORT-TERM RENTALS ARE UNDER SIEGE

Port Angeles, WA -- A nonprofit organization, the Olympic Peninsula Lodging Alliance (OPLA), launched in early December 2023 in response to the City of Port Angeles' actions to enforce a previously unenforced code that has threatened the closure of most of the city's short-term rentals (STRs).

OPLA is a coalition of homeowners, tourism-related businesses, service providers and others dedicated to the support of the vacation rental community and other lodging options in Port Angeles and on the Olympic Peninsula. Officially registered as a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization on December 12, 2023, the Olympic Peninsula Lodging Alliance has been working with short-term rental owners, the Port Angeles city council and staff, and the public to educate and advocate for the city's hosting community.

According to a recent report released by the City, there are currently 234 short-term rentals in Port Angeles, representing 2%-3% percent of the city's housing stock.

The Alliance was formed following the City of Port Angeles' enforcement action against short-term rentals located in the city's low- and mixed-density residential neighborhoods. There are 185 STRs in this zone, nearly 80 percent of all STRs in the city. The 2017 city zoning code does not permit STRs in this zone, yet the code was unenforced. STR owners inquiring with the City to ensure they were legally operating were told not to worry, "there is no enforcement."

Since the unenforced code was enacted in 2017, the City has collected more than \$1 million in lodging taxes from these same homeowners.

The code stipulated that complaints would lead to enforcement, and suddenly in 2023, 118 complaints were lodged against STRs in low- and mixed-density zones. The volume of complaints triggered the City to begin enforcement, and homes receiving complaints received Cease and Desist letters warning of \$500 a day fines if they did not close immediately. Many

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closed, which has caused hardship for owners and service providers in a region with a challenging economy.

A public records request by OPLA in December resulted in what the Alliance has labeled “Complaint-Gate:” Nearly 90 percent of the complaints to Code Enforcement came from five individuals, with one person submitting 70 complaints. Only 14 individuals were responsible for all complaints filed.

In a series of City Council meetings throughout late 2023, Alliance members and other advocates have informed the City Council of the extreme financial challenges faced by homeowners and hundreds of service providers posed by closing these STRs, and the City is now working to create new regulations for short-term rentals.

The Olympic Peninsula Lodging Alliance advocates for fair and transparent regulations and reasonable fees that provide STR owners with a clear path toward operating legally.

A 501 (c)(6) nonprofit organization, the Olympic Peninsula Lodging Alliance launched in December 2023 in response to the City of Port Angeles’ actions that threatened most of the city’s short-term rentals. The Olympic Peninsula Lodging Alliance is a coalition of homeowners, tourism-related businesses, service providers and others dedicated to the support of the vacation rental community and other lodging options in Port Angeles and on the Olympic Peninsula.

To learn more about the Olympic Peninsula Lodging Alliance, please visit www.olympicpeninsulalodgingalliance.org.

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