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Supervisor Lori Hayes  
Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors  
P.O. Box 99  
Spotsylvania, VA 22553

Dear Chairman Hayes:

On behalf of the more than 1,700 Realtor® and affiliate members of the Fredericksburg Area Association of Realtors® (FAAR), I am writing about short-term rental regulations currently pending before the Spotsylvania County Planning Commission. We appreciate the County's efforts to address neighborhood impacts related to short-term rentals while preserving property rights and housing opportunities. We respectfully submit the following concerns and recommendations regarding the proposed short-term rental ordinance.

### **Occupancy Limits**

The proposed requirement limiting occupancy to two people per bedroom is overly restrictive and does not reflect how homes are safely designed or used. A more effective and objective approach would be to base occupancy on water usage rather than a fixed headcount. Septic systems are already rated by daily gallon capacity, which provides a clear, enforceable standard. The County could require short-term rental owners to install a flow meter and ensure guest usage remains within the system's approved daily flow limits. This approach protects infrastructure while allowing flexibility for families and guests.

### **Septic System Requirements**

Mandating annual pumping of septic systems may lead to unnecessary expense, especially for low volume rentals. A visual, walk-over and probe inspection can be mandated annually to ensure that systems are not leeching into the surrounding ground.

### **Enforcement and Penalties**

Automatic revocation of a short-term rental license upon a first violation is overly punitive and may discourage compliance. We encourage the County to consider a graduated enforcement framework that includes warnings, corrective action periods, and escalating penalties for repeat violations.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the Spotsylvania County community. FAAR looks forward to working collaboratively with the County to achieve fair and balanced short-term rental regulations.

Sincerely,

*Matthew Rathbun*

Matthew Rathbun  
President

