



May 8, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor
State of Florida
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

As you work to safely re-open the state, we write to urge you to reconsider the continued ban on vacation rental homes in Florida. Section 3(D) of Executive Order 20-112 unfairly targets vacation rental properties and sends a message to individuals that they are not as safe as hotels, which is an unjust presupposition.

While we understand that hotels were never closed, vacation rentals can be safer for travelers because they do not have many of the shared spaces that those staying at hotels must inevitably share. Vacation rentals can easily provide safer lodging, where social distancing is easier to achieve and risk of spreading the virus is less likely. The majority of vacation rentals in Osceola County are located in short-term rental communities, with no permanent residents and managed by companies that abide by procedures and standards set forth by the Vacation Rental Management Association. Many of these properties are licensed in accordance with Chapter 509 of the Florida Statutes and are managed and operated just like hotels, specifically following the same sanitary regulations that hotels follow.

Additionally, the decision to ban vacation rentals has resulted in a significant economic impact, not only for the state of Florida, but for Osceola County and the central Florida region in general. Annually, vacation rentals represent a \$27.4 billion economic impact for the state of Florida, and a \$2 billion impact on Osceola County's economy. Prior to the pandemic, the vacation home rental industry was responsible for generating more than 300 new jobs daily. In Osceola County alone, there are 30,000 licensed vacation home rentals that represent half of the County's \$60 million tourism development tax dollars. Many of these management companies are small businesses that are going to be forced to close their doors permanently if immediate action is not taken.

Finally, we cannot over emphasize the unintended ripple effects of the decision to continue the ban on rental homes is having on those businesses that are re-opening. As restaurants and retail stores begin to re-open, they lack a customer base, because they depend on the short-term vacation rentals to generate business. The vacation rental workers and guests generate demand for house cleaning, pool cleaning, rental cars, and a host of other businesses, in addition to restaurants and retail stores, and without that demand, these ancillary industries are suffering.

Letter to Honorable Governor DeSantis
Page 2 of 2 – RE: Vacation Rental Homes – Osceola County
May 8, 2020

For the safety of those who are traveling and the economic viability of Osceola County and the state of Florida, we urge you to reconsider the continued ban on vacation rental homes. We respectfully request that you allow local governments to make the decision to lift the ban on vacation rental homes within their jurisdictions or to exclude central Florida counties from the ban. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for all that you do.

Sincerely,



Viviana Janer
Chairwoman
Osceola Board of County Commissioners



Rep. Mike La Rosa
Florida House of Representatives



John Newstreet
President/CEO
Kissimmee/Osceola Chamber of Commerce



DT Minich
President/CEO
Experience Kissimmee

/MN/is