

# Letter: SLT VHR is not a regular bus stop

**Publisher's note:** *This is in response to Scott Ramirez's letter.*

Dear Mr. Ramirez,



Joshua Priou

My name is Joshua Priou and I manage the property that is located directly across the street from you, I have been the sole property manager since it became a vacation home rental in 2012. After reading your article I became quite saddened to hear of your concerns and I felt it was necessary to clarify and shed some light on your comments.

- The home was built in 2007 by a builder who chose to have his family live there. It only became a vacation rental after the new buyer purchased the home in 2011. It was not designed to house as many people as possible. On the contrary, it is only a three-bedroom home that can only house 10 occupants.

- Not that I necessarily agree with a chartered bus arriving in your neighborhood, in this situation it was the right thing to do. These guests actually booked five houses with our company, your neighbor being one of them. It was a youth group that was chaperoned, and the chartered bus was ideal to avoid parking issues. They only used the bus to drop

off on Friday evening and pick up on Sunday morning. It is my understanding that these guests did not over occupy the home, did not create any unreasonable noise, there were no trash issues, and obviously there were no parking problems. The group also paid \$964.44 in transient occupancy taxes to the city of South Lake Tahoe.

- I will comment that I am happy to hear you state “the owners are nice people” and “most of the visitors mind their manners.” But the front of your house has not become a bus stop. Rather, they parked across the street and only for a moment. I presume you will never find a chartered bus arriving at that home again.

- Under the current city of South Lake Tahoe VHR Ordinance Section 3.50.440 Conditions of Operations, Sub-Section 0: “Parking of Commercial vehicle(s) on a vacation home property, except temporarily for durations of less than four hours, shall be prohibited.” The code states that a chartered bus dropping off and picking up a youth group is perfectly acceptable and not a violation of the VHR Ordinance.

- In 2017, this home only booked 70 nights of vacation rental guests. That means that 295 days of the year or 81 percent of the time, that home remained empty. I would think that your peace is overwhelming since you basically have an empty house across the street from you.

- Lake Tahoe Accommodations are great stewards in bringing good guests and nice families to our tourist destination but we only hear of all the negativity about vacation rentals. Based on stats from the city of South Lake Tahoe, 99 percent-plus of all vacation rental reservations do not cause any problems. Instead of hearing from the upset neighbors and the minor problems they are seeing let’s hear what some of the guests that have stayed at this home have said about visiting Lake Tahoe and enjoying it in a vacation rental.

**Kathy R – Hercules, CA**

**07/12/2017**

My family had a wonderful time. The house was great! I have been coming to Lake Tahoe since I was little, the house was in an area where I had never stayed. The area was great also, nice and quiet and great for taking walks in the evening time.

**Veronica A – Salinas, CA**

**03/01/2016**

This place is beautiful! Better than I expected great location only 15 minute drive to the casinos. We were there for 3 nights and I wish I could of been there longer. The home looks like new with beautiful ceilings and so much detail the floors are heated such a clean place. The rooms were perfect and the beds were so comfortable and cozy. We totally took advantage of the huge kitchen it had all the appliances you need. We enjoyed cooking there and saved a lot of money. I also was able to do a load of laundry they even have detergent for you. They provide the towels, toilet paper, and had enough house cleaning supplies. My kids had a blast in the backyard there was snow we also took a walk down the street there is an area that looks like a forest so it was exciting. Customer service was great very helpful and polite. We rented snowmobiles at a reasonable price \$65 for two and 1/2 hour we had fun! I would totally recommend this home and there is nothing bad I can say except I'm never staying at a hotel from now on... I can't wait to go back! By the way we went to the oyster bar at the Hard Rock Cafe for those who love oysters.

**Morgan D – Turlock, CA**

**01/17/2015**

Our stay at his location was by far a wonderful experience ! My family and I couldn't have been happier to have chosen this cabin. It met all our needs which made our weekend trip so enjoyable. We loved it so much we are already planning our next trip and def booking this cabin again. I would def recommend this cabin for others to book, and thanks so much to

Lake Tahoe Accommodations for your service.

**Lorena V – San Pablo, CA**

**04/02/2014**

This cabin was the best it was so beautiful. Very clean. the kitchen was well equipped with everything we needed. No need to worry about anything. The cabin was a great size for a big family. We are already planning are next trip. Also the people at Lake Tahoe Accommodations are very nice and helpful check in and check out. Was very easy, great trip we will be back.

You offered solutions to the VHR dilemma you are facing. I need to clarify:

1. All costs associated with responding to the VHR are covered by VHR fees. The city collects over \$700,000 from VHR permit fees. These fees pay for enforcement officers, police, staff, city manager and city attorney. The city has been keeping track of these funds and they always have an overage.

2. Clean Tahoe is a nonprofit and do respond to all trash issues within the city limits, not just VHRs. There are fines associated with a trash violation that would be charged to the home owner to pay for their services.

3. There are five dedicated enforcement officers that are paid by VHR permit fees to patrol and respond to neighbor complaints. At this time there is an average of about one call per day to this enforcement team. Not sure if it is necessary to have five of them, the city is looking at this on a trial basis right now.

4. The management agent or owners are held accountable to inspect their VHRs and ensure they are meeting current guidelines. The home owner pays a fee to the city to send a building inspector to the home for safety concerns.

5. There is a process for residents to contest an existing VHR license. Since 2015, the city required a zoning

administration hearing to allow residents to protest a new VHR application. The city provided this hearing at an extraordinary cost to the home owner. It has since been proven to be an unsuccessful program. Now, if a VHR creates three permit violations within a 24-month period, their license will be revoked and they will not be able to operate as a vacation rental any longer. These violations can be a public disturbance, noise, trash, parking, and over occupancy issues.

Mr. Ramirez, I am not sure of what your intentions were when you posted this letter to social media and then onto the local papers, but I would think it would be wise to research the information before writing about things you are unaware. I am sorry a bus pulled into your neighborhood for a short time to drop off and pick up chaperoned youth, but this letter has only sparked outrage in the community. Your findings are incomplete and unfounded as actual issues. Maybe it would be wise for you to make your voice heard in public hearings and with the City Council rather than hiding behind social media. Or schedule a meeting with me so that we can discuss our management program, explain how we have your neighborhood's best interest in mind, and allow you to discuss your concerns of having a vacation rental across the street.

**Joshua Priou, director of product development Lake Tahoe Accommodations**