



March 21, 2023

Testimony in **OPPOSITION** to LD 691 "**An Act to Reduce Barriers to Housing by Prohibiting Tenant Application Fees**"

To the Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

The Central Maine Apartment Owners Association (CMAOA) is a landlord membership organization of over 650, as well as a cooperative team member of other landlord associations across the State of Maine including: Southern Maine, Lewiston Auburn, Greater Bangor Area, and Augusta Area. We provide educational events, sponsor community events, provide access to discounts on supplies and industry needs like fuels, flooring materials and paint. Our overall goal is to support Landlords in providing safe and affordable housing in collaboration with the valuable good renters in our area. CMAOA and the other organizations are neutral, nonpartisan, member led groups that have the common goal of keeping the rental housing industry safe, educated, and competitive.

We are asking you to **Oppose LD 691 as it is written.**

Our membership has expressed mixed feelings on applications. Predominately those who do charge application fees state they only charge them because they use an online program that charges them. Many landlords do not agree with application fees. In fact, many who do not state that they feel that NOT charging fees helps them to get more applications to review and begins with a better working relationship between landlord and future tenant. We have not heard from even one of our members that they feel that using application fees as a source of income is even ethical!

The administration costs for those who use online services do need to be paid, if not with app fee than it will be in higher rents or move in costs. We should be looking at ways to keep the smaller landlords continuing to provide that personal, one/one application process rather than going to impersonal online for cost services.

We urge you to oppose LD 691.

PLEASE SUPPORT EDUCATION RESOURCES TO HAVE APPLICANTS COME WITH THEIR OWN CREDIT REPORT AND FUND THE STATE IN PROVIDING PEOPLE WITH A FREE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK EACH YEAR.

Board of Directors of Central Maine Apartment Owners Association, Waterville, Maine

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