

**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS TO THE
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY PROVIDED IN SUPPORT OF LD #1931
“An Act to Foster Stable and Affordable Home Ownership in Mobile Home Parks by
Amending the Laws Relating to the Sale of Mobile Home Parks”**

DATE OF HEARING: May 23, 2023

**Honorable Senator Teresa Pierce, Honorable Representative Traci Gere, Distinguished
Members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing:**

“Mobile homes are a much bigger part of our affordable housing stock than people know,” said Mark Stapp, who directs Arizona State University’s master’s degree program in real estate development. “Once it’s gone, a lot of people will have no place to go.”¹

The Maine Association of Planners (MAP) strongly supports LD #1931.

In recent years the worsening availability and affordability of housing has led community and regional planners in Maine to begin to think more deeply about the role that manufactured housing dwelling units and manufactured housing communities (mobile home parks) play in the overall housing picture. Manufactured housing communities (MHCs) in particular command attention because of the way they reduce housing costs through both increased density and lower costs of construction.

While we feel that more needs to be done in general to make it easier to develop affordable manufactured housing communities in Maine, MAP also recognizes the need to protect the residents, and the affordability, of existing MHCs—which is what LD #1931 does. It ensures, when there is a sale of a manufactured housing community, that the residents will get a reasonable opportunity to know about the sale and to have enough time to decide if they want to make an offer to the seller and to obtain financing.

Thanks to the work of the Cooperative Development Institute, we have learned that some of the issues facing MCH residents in Maine include:

¹ *Low-Income Tenants Lack Options as Mobile Home Parks are Razed*, Anita Snow, Maine Sunday Telegram, May 21, 2023.



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- No effective notice at the time of an MHC sale;
- Limited options to match a sale offer from a third party;
- No voice in community rules;
- No voice in lot rent increases;
- It is cost-prohibitive to move a manufactured home; estimates range from \$10,000 - \$20,000, making residents of MHCs “captive” tenants to the land owner.
- No security via long-term land leases;
- No security against MHC closure for redevelopment.

To address these problems, LD #1931 would provide:

- A proper, legal notice to homeowners and the state that the owners intend to sell the community;
- A 60-day period during which the residents can organize, incorporate as a nonprofit with the state, and make an informed choice about whether to make their own offer to the seller;
- A reasonable time period after the 60-day period to obtain financing.
- A requirement that the seller negotiates in good faith with the residents.
- An effective enforcement mechanism.

As a reflection of the seriousness of MAP's interest in manufactured housing, we are devoting the principal workshop at our upcoming Spring Conference to the topic.

Please support this bill—thank you.

Sincerely,



Charles (Tex) Haeuser, Member
Maine Association of Planners Legislative Policy Committee

