



Written Testimony of Liza Fleming-Ives

On behalf of the Genesis Fund
Before the Joint Select Committee on Housing

In Support of LD1931: 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

May 23, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, my name is Liza Fleming-Ives. I am the Executive Director of the Genesis Community Loan Fund.

The Genesis Fund is a critical link and a proven guide in the development of affordable housing and community facilities in Maine. We're a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution with a mission to bring together resources to create housing and other economic and social opportunities in communities across Maine. We have a 30-year track record of providing financing and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations and mission-oriented project developers throughout the state.

Affordable housing is a primary focus of our work and mobile homes are an important housing option for many of Maine's lowest income residents. Maine has over 700 mobile home parks which are home to approximately 40,000 Maine residents. Residents in investor-owned mobile home parks face unique vulnerabilities when renting the site on which they place their home: sudden and unreasonable rent increases, failed and dangerous infrastructure (water, septic, roads), and change of use closures leading to expensive displacement of residents and often loss of home.

The conversion of parks to resident-ownership not only removes these risks, but also provides many economic and civic benefits to residents. The resident-owned model puts community ownership and operations in the hands of the residents themselves, providing stability as well as long-term housing affordability.

The Genesis Fund has been a leader in supporting resident-owned communities in Maine for over a decade and in that time has helped to finance the conversion of ten communities with over 500 Maine households. As one long-time park resident of a community said to us, "Now I don't have to worry about someone coming in, buying the land and kicking us all out. I don't have to worry about a huge rent increase or not having any place to go."



Passing LD 1931 will help make resident-ownership possible for more communities in Maine. It will provide notice and an opportunity for park residents to organize and make an offer to the selling owner.

It will require:

- A proper, legal notice to homeowners and the state when the owners intend to sell a community;
- A 60-day period during which the residents can organize, incorporate as a limited equity affordable housing cooperative with the state, and make an informed choice about whether to make an 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; and
- An effective enforcement mechanism.

Mobile home parks remain some of the most affordable, non-subsidized housing in the United States. The conversion of investor-owned parks to resident-owned parks is proven to help preserve this important sector of affordable housing. LD 1931 will make more resident-purchases of communities possible. We urge you to support this legislation and vote “ought to pass.”

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.