



131st Legislature
Joint Select Committee on Housing

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition

May 23, 2023

In favor of 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 - sponsored by Representative Traci Gere

Good afternoon, Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, my name is Laura Mitchell, I serve as the Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition.

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC) is a nonprofit membership organization of more than 140 Maine housing development, architecture, construction, design, engineering, shelter, and housing services organizations. We work to address Maine's housing crisis by advocating for the creation and preservation of housing for all people in Maine.

MAHC is sharing this testimony today in favor of LD 1931, a 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 that is sponsored by Representative Traci Gere. This bill requires the owner of a mobile home park to give notice of the intent to sell to each mobile home owner and Maine Housing. It requires a 60-day window for the owner to negotiate with mobile home residents to purchase the park.

This procedural change empowers and provides equity to residents of unsubsidized affordable housing in mobile home parks throughout Maine. Maine has approximately 714 of these parks, housing 40,000 Maine people. Residents own their home, but not the land. They are vulnerable to rising lot rents, and inadequate water, sewer, and electrical systems. There is consolidation in ownership of mobile home parks in Maine and this threatens this vital source of affordable housing. These sales put residents at risk for park closure for redevelopment.

There are successful examples of mobile home park purchases by residents in Maine and across the nation. **These purchases preserve critical units of affordable housing and builds equity for these new homeowners.** It is just the type of evidence-based, low-cost strategy that Maine must apply to ensure all Maine people have an affordable home for the long term.

Maine is in a housing crisis and demand outstrips supply. The state lacks 20,000 units of affordable housing for those who need it most. **Building new affordable housing is vital, but preserving existing affordable housing is equally important.** LD1931 proactively supports preservation of these homes and should be a part of Maine's comprehensive approach to ensuring all Maine people have a home.

Thank you.

Laura Mitchell
Portland
LD 1931

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