



Testimony to the Joint Standing Committee on Housing
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

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Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Housing:

My name is Amy Winston and I live in Edgecomb. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1931 on behalf of [Coastal Enterprises, Inc. \(CEI\)](#), a community development corporation (CDC) and community development financial institution (CDFI) based in Brunswick. Founded in 1977, CEI works to build a just, vibrant, and climate resilient future for people in communities in Maine and other rural regions. We do this by integrating financing, business and industry expertise, and policy solutions. CEI has had a long history of engagement in the affordable housing space. While we no longer manage affordable housing properties, we continue to finance projects that create new housing units, catalyze economic activity, create jobs, and revitalize downtowns. CEI is a member of the Maine Alliance for Smart Growth and of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. Affordable workforce housing is a key economic challenge for the businesses we finance, affecting their ability to recruit and retain workers.

CEI's Financial Development Services team provides direct counseling services, focusing on foreclosure prevention counseling for distressed borrowers and consumers throughout the state. Notably, they work with Maine's ten *resident-owned manufactured housing communities (ROCs)*, which house some of the state's most vulnerable residents, on a 12-month financial wellness program. Comprised of people with low incomes and seniors, these residents have chosen this housing option not only based on cost but also based upon the idea of ownership and community membership.

There are roughly 40,000 Mainers living in approximately 714 manufactured housing communities (MHCs), or mobile home parks. These individuals do not own the land they live on, only the home that they live on, renting the land on which their mobile homes are situated. These homeowners are uniquely vulnerable in that they face rent instability, rely on water, sewer and electrical systems that are inadequate, and risk being displaced when a MHC is closed for redevelopment. When a MHC is sold, mobile home owners are forced to accept higher lot rates, as the cost of relocation of a mobile home - \$10,000-20,000 - is often beyond the means of its occupant. As such, mobile homes are not truly mobile; studies show that 80% of manufactured homes are never moved once sited. Moreover, should the buyer decide to repurpose MHC land for an alternative use, residents who are forced out and cannot afford to transport their home to a new location are often forced into homelessness. *Currently*, when a landowner sells MHC property, *they do not need to notify those living on the land*.

LD 1931 would institute several key changes that protect Mainers living in MHCs:

- The bill would require notice be given to mobile homeowners and Maine State Housing Authority in the event of the sale of MHC property.



- After receiving notice, residents have a sixty-day window in which they can decide whether to organize and purchase the land on which they live from the seller.
- The seller must negotiate in good faith and provide reasonable time for current resident's access financing to secure the purchase. Any offer made by the group of mobile homeowners must include a purchase and sale agreement.

This bill provides necessary protections to mobile homeowners, while providing them with an opportunity to secure ownership of the land on which they live, thereby stabilizing their current occupancy and future access to housing. Affordable housing in Maine is hard to come by. By protecting those who already live in affordable housing. CEI sees LD 1931 as a critical step and straightforward solution for both preventing Maine's housing issues from getting worse and for supporting the financial wellness of Maine's MHC residents. We urge you to vote Ought-to-Pass on LD 1931. Thank you for considering our testimony.