

Emmy Andersson
Cooperative Maine Business Alliance
LD 554

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation,

My name is Emmy Andersson, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Cooperative Maine Business Alliance (CMBA) in support of LD 554. As Maine's network of cooperative businesses, we advocate for policies that promote local ownership, democratic business structures, and economic resilience.

LD 554 is a targeted and effective way to strengthen local ownership and preserve affordable housing through the cooperative model. The formation of resident-owned communities (ROCs) across Maine have enabled homeowners to collectively purchase the land under their homes, protecting affordability and preventing displacement. However, the housing market is shifting, with large out-of-state investors purchasing mobile home communities, often leading to rent increases that burden low- and moderate-income homeowners.

Despite Maine's Opportunity to Purchase law, which has given residents the chance to compete as buyers, even competitive offers from resident groups are being rejected. In many cases, sellers opt for out-of-state corporate buyers, perceiving them as faster or more certain transactions. A modest tax incentive, as proposed in LD 554, could serve as the deciding factor, encouraging park owners to choose their residents first. It could help reinforce the success of Maine's cooperative housing model in securing affordable housing units and enhancing the quality of life for individuals in these communities.

Maine's cooperative housing, food, and worker-owned businesses share a common thread: they keep resources local, build economic stability, and foster resilient communities. LD 554 would help ensure that more Maine residents have the opportunity to own, control, and protect their homes through democratic cooperative ownership. We urge you to support this bill and advance Maine's commitment to community-driven solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Emmy Andersson
Network Coordinator
Cooperative Maine Business Alliance