

March 31, 2025

Housing Committee

RE: LD1067 – Public Hearing

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Sandra Hinkley. I am the Owner of Maple Hill Estates, a manufactured home community in Mechanic Falls. I have owned this community for over 10 years, and my parents owned it for nearly 20 years before me. For decades, my family and I have supplied affordable housing to thousands of families. Previously, I also owned Country Lane Homes in Lewiston, a retailer of manufactured housing that was in business selling affordable housing since 1984, until we closed our doors last summer. I am also a licensed Realtor in Maine for the past 18 years.

Our community is home to a variety of family dynamics, we have first time homebuyers, young families, empty nesters, and retirees all enjoying a peaceful way of life in our community.

LD1067 is asking for a couple of changes to the new law enacted last year. Currently, when a manufactured home community owner wants to sell their community, they must notify tenants via certified mail with all the terms of the sale, and allow the tenants 60 days to form an association (of at least 51% of the tenants) to make an offer to purchase. This proposal increases the required number of tenants from a simple majority to 60%. I am in favor of this increase, as I feel a decision of this magnitude (to purchase a mobile home community) needs the support of more than a simple majority. The purchase of a mobile home community by its tenants should be embraced by all, and by increasing the requirement to 60%, it encourages the entire community to get involved in the decision process, and not leave it to only a few. The decision will affect ALL tenants, so more than 51% need to be at the table making that decision.

The second part of this proposal is to include a limit on the solicitation that happens when homeowners are working on organizing and starting up an association within their community. Most communities, mine included, do not allow soliciting, and our tenants enjoy the peace of knowing no one will be knocking on their doors trying to “sell” them something. And when their peace is interrupted and someone is knocking, they can call

me and I quickly get to the bottom of who is soliciting and they are asked to leave. However, when this law passed, and tenants were going door to door trying to get their “neighbors” to join them in creating an association, they would stop at nothing to get to the needed 51%. I have experienced this in other communities I managed that sold last year. I would get calls from tenants telling me people had been to their home numerous times, refused to leave when asked. Some tenants “signed something” to get the people to stop coming by. There was no identification, no explanation of what they were signing, and the form they signed was so vague most didn’t know WHAT they signed. And for those that refused to sign, or not answer the door, they were not left alone and were repeatedly approached. I reached out to CDI months after the community sales had completed, and asked them what type of guidance or training they provided to the tenants for acquiring signatures and forming the association. When I told them of my experience, they seemed surprised, and promised me they would work on better guidance and training for the tenants going forward. I reached out twice since my meeting with them, but have never received any correspondence back from them, so I do not know if they have made any changes or not. Therefore, this legislation is important, so we can ensure our residents are not harassed, or pitted neighbor against neighbor, causing so much stress and anxiety in a community that should be peaceful for all.

I would appreciate your vote of Ought to Pass on this bill. I appreciate all the work you do on behalf of Mainers and look forward to working with you in the future. I would be happy to answer any questions and to be available for the work session.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sandra Hinkley

Maple Hill Estates / Country Lane Homes