

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary on LD 1471, An Act to Require Energy Efficiency Disclosure Statements and Energy Efficiency Standards for Certain Rental Housing in the State

April 11, 2025

Representatives Eder, Sachs, Julia, and the esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary: I am Robert Michael Norton of Portland; owner of East End Property Management. I am writing to express my strong opposition to Legislative Document 1471 (LD 1471), "An Act to Require Energy Efficiency Disclosure Statements and Energy Efficiency Standards for Certain Rental Housing in the State."

As a property manager, landlord, and a resident of Maine, I am deeply concerned about the potential implications of this legislation and its impact on landlords, tenants, and the housing market.

While I understand the importance of promoting energy efficiency and transparency, I believe that this legislative proposal may impose undue burdens on landlords, increase housing costs, and reduce rental availability. I would like to highlight the following concerns:

- **Existing Law Already Covers Disclosure:** Maine already has laws in place that require landlords to disclose certain information to tenants. Adding additional disclosure requirements is redundant and unnecessary, creating more paperwork without providing significant benefits.
- **Upgrading Older Housing is Unrealistic:** Many rental properties in Maine are older buildings that would require extensive and costly upgrades to meet the proposed energy efficiency standards. These upgrades are often impractical or impossible due to the age and structure of the buildings.
- **Jurisdictional Overreach by the PUC:** The proposed legislation appears to expand the authority of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) into areas that may exceed its intended jurisdiction. This overreach could create confusion and inefficiencies in enforcement.
- **Cost-Prohibitive Requirements:** The cost of compliance with the proposed energy efficiency standards would be prohibitive for many landlords, particularly small landlords who operate on tight margins.
- **Small Landlords Bear the Brunt:** Small landlords, who make up a significant portion of Maine's rental housing providers, would be disproportionately affected by the financial and administrative burdens of this legislation. This could lead to a reduction in the availability of affordable rental housing.

- **Unintended Consequences:** The legislation could have unintended consequences, such as discouraging investment in rental properties or prompting landlords to sell their properties, further exacerbating Maines housing shortage.
- **The Cost of Building Upgrades will Inevitably be Passed on to Tenants:** The financial burden of complying with these requirements will likely be passed on to tenants in the form of higher rents, making housing even less affordable for Maine residents.

Maines housing market is already facing significant challenges, including affordability issues and limited availability. It is crucial that any new legislation takes these factors into account and avoids creating additional barriers for landlords and tenants.

I respectfully request that you reconsider the provisions of LD 1471 and explore alternative solutions that balance energy efficiency goals with the needs of Maines residents and housing providers. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I appreciate your commitment to serving the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

Robert Michael Norton
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