

As a homeowner/resident of Old Orchard Village, a manufactured home park, I strongly support LD 1723.

In early 2024, we were informed that our park was being sold. We immediately organized and sought assistance to become a resident-owned co-op. Long story short, we obtained enough support from residents to move forward with forming a co-op. With the assistance of CDI, we were able to get financing. Unfortunately, the park owners rejected the residents' offer, which was slightly higher than the out-of-state corporation that the park owners selected.

The identify of the new owners was kept secret for months. We finally learned that it was a California-based corporation, that among other investments, purchases manufactured home parks. Around the same time, we were informed by the original park owners that there would be a very large rent increase which was required by the new owners. The rent was increased by \$75 a month.

Because park residents were well aware of the implications of our park being purchased by out of state investors, a group of residents organized a citizens' petition for a rent control ordinance. As this was felt to be an emergency situation, a model ordinance from a city in California was used. The ordinance was fought "tooth and nail", by Follett USA, the new out of state corporate park owner. The proposed ordinance was approved in a referendum in November 2024.

The OOB Rent Stabilization Ordinance allows the park owner to increase rent by up to 5% per year. It also allows the owner to recoup expenditures for emergency repairs. In February 2025, Follett USA informed OOV/AV residents of a 5% rent increase, plus an assessment of \$10.85 per month for 60 months for "emergency repairs." However, the "emergency repairs" were for a water leak that had existed for years, and should either have been declared by the previous owner, or discovered during due diligence by the new owner.

We have observed a decrease in services/maintenance since the park was sold to Follett USA. Snow plowing this winter was slow and haphazard. Personally, I was unable to get out on 2 Sunday mornings for my volunteer job at a local food pantry because the snow on my street was not plowed. Sand from sanding during the winter remains on the park roads. The former park owner kept the street sweeping equipment. The maintenance staff has been decreased to 1 person for the 3 park areas.

LD 1723 provides a limit of 10% rent increase over a period of 4 years. This is reasonable in the current economic climate, where the CPI is currently 2.4% and has remained under 3% for 9 months.

In a state with a housing shortage, and a severe shortage of affordable housing, manufactured home parks can fill a large need if rents are stabilized. Many park residents have limited incomes. For some a large rent increases mean making choices between rent, food, medication.

Respectfully submitted,
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