

Testimony in Support of LD 1723 & LD 1765

LD 1723: *An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Manufactured Housing Communities to Prevent Excessive Rent and Fees Increases*

LD 1765: *An Act to Ensure Affordability and stability in Housing for Mobile Home Park Residents*

To: Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development

From: Southern Midcoast Housing Collaborative, Brunswick, ME

We are writing on behalf of the Southern Midcoast Housing Collaborative (SMHC) in **SUPPORT** of passing LD 1723 or LD 1765 to ensure affordability and stability in housing for mobile home park residents. SMHC is a local coalition of southern midcoast agencies and community volunteers serving Sagadahoc County, Brunswick and Harpswell, working together to ensure accessible housing is available to all.

Limiting rent and fees for mobile home park residents would protect tens of thousands of Mainers from losing their homes and potentially facing homelessness by preventing the owners from dramatically and suddenly raising the rent. Mobile home parks are a vital source of affordable housing for residents who own their own homes but have, on average, lower incomes than both homeowners and renters who don't live in manufactured housing.

We are seeing the impact of these unfair rent increases in a large mobile home park in Brunswick, where, since the end of 2021, lot rents for existing residents have increased more than 45% to \$600 or more per month. New residents are paying \$800 or more per month. For many, this is unsustainable. However, like many Maine communities, our area is facing an extreme housing shortage, so there is nowhere for residents to go, if they could sell their homes – which is difficult when potential buyers learn about the steep lot fee. Our mobile home park residents are a diverse and valued community group, including young families just starting out, older people, people with disabilities, and veterans. Like all of us, they deserve stable housing and to not be forced out of their homes by excessive fees and rent increases.

We are disappointed that after decades as a reliably inexpensive housing option, mobile home parks have in the past decade become trendy for out-of-state corporate real estate investors, who have been quietly buying up parks at a rapid pace.

Mobile home park residents deserve protection. These bills are a strong start.

Sincerely,

Carol O'Donnell, Melissa Fochesato
Co Chairs, Southern Midcoast Housing Collaborative