



Testimony of Robyn Wardell

On behalf of the Genesis Community Loan Fund
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Neither For Nor Against LD 1723
“An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Manufactured Housing Communities to
Prevent Excessive Rent and Fees Increases”

May 2, 2025

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

My name is Robyn Wardell and I am a Senior Program Officer at The Genesis Fund.

Genesis is a certified nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution—a CDFI—working throughout Maine to bring resources together to create solutions to the affordable housing crisis.

Genesis is supportive of increased protections for residents of mobile home communities to help preserve affordability and stabilize rents. For LD 1723, we would like to speak specifically in support of Section 10 of the amended bill, which calls for the collection of additional data through the existing licensing and re-licensing process for mobile home communities. The additional information would be an invaluable resource for policymakers and practitioners to help make informed decisions based on comprehensive and current statewide data.

Last month, Genesis provided this committee with a report on the trend in sales of mobile home communities to out-of-state investor owners and its impact on residents across the state. As we conducted this research, we were challenged in our efforts due to a lack of available data. The information gathered by the Manufactured Housing Board is very limited. As an example, there is currently no statewide information available on fees and rents in mobile home communities. Our team had to track down that information through conversations with



residents and conducting extensive online searches in order to build a data sample. While this data painted a powerful picture of rents at select parks, it would be even more instructive to inform the policymaking process if that data had been available for all communities and tracked over time.

In order to better understand the experience of residents at parks with different types of ownership (from resident cooperatives to equity investors to local entrepreneurs), information about ownership entities is critical. In order to understand how different ownership structures impact residents' cost of living, tracking rents and fees over time is important. And lastly, in order to create more housing and identify opportunities for infill development at underutilized parks, getting accurate data on occupied lots in addition to licensed lots is essential.

An efficient and effective way to collect this information is through the existing licensing and annual re-licensing process for mobile home communities. This information would serve both to inform decisions on new interventions as well as evaluate the impact of existing policies.

We support the proposal in this bill to request additional data collection, though we would recommend the following changes:

- Rather than average rents, request minimum and maximum rents
- For ease and consistency, have applicants indicate which fees are included in rent rather than requiring a list of their own fee schedule
- Revise language that requests information about each park owned by the applicant to more clearly ask about the ownership structure of the applicant and all of its affiliated entities

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.