

Dear Honorable Members of the Legislature,

I am writing to you today as the manager of a small, independent housing provider located here in Fairfield, Maine. **We wish to express deep concern regarding LD 1806, the proposed act to create a statewide residential rental unit registry, and urge you to oppose this legislation.** While we support the goal of ensuring safe and decent housing, we firmly believe this registry is not the right path forward. It creates significant new burdens, particularly for small operators like ours, without effectively addressing the problems it claims to solve.

For small housing providers, who often operate with limited resources compared to larger companies, this registry represents a substantial new layer of bureaucracy and expense. It feels duplicative, asking for information likely already available through municipal tax records or code enforcement. These added administrative costs and fees don't just impact our bottom line; they inevitably contribute to the rising cost of housing, ultimately making rentals less affordable for the very tenants this bill might be intended to help. This legislation risks pushing conscientious small landlords – businesses that are part of the local community – out of the market, potentially leading to more properties being owned by large, out-of-state corporations.

Furthermore, we question the effectiveness of such a registry. History suggests that truly negligent property owners, those who already disregard safety codes and tenant rights, are unlikely to comply with registration mandates. This bill, therefore, ends up targeting and penalizing responsible landlords who *do* follow the rules, while the bad actors continue to operate outside the system. Simply registering a property does nothing to guarantee its quality or the landlord's accountability; those who comply are typically already the ones providing safe, habitable homes.

Our most significant concern, however, lies in how LD 1806 ties fundamental legal rights, such as accessing the eviction process for non-payment, to perfect compliance with registry rules. This essentially weaponizes technicalities. An honest mistake, a missed deadline on a new form, or confusion over constantly changing regulations could strip a small housing provider of due process. It's telling that even state resources, like the Attorney General's model lease, haven't always kept pace with recent legal updates. If the state itself struggles with administrative timeliness, how can it be fair to impose such strict penalties on small providers navigating this complex landscape?

Instead of creating another layer of regulation that burdens compliant landlords and can be easily ignored by bad ones, we believe resources should be directed towards robustly enforcing the housing laws and safety codes already on the books. Let's invest in ensuring that existing standards are met, rather than diverting resources to managing more paperwork.

As a small housing provider, our business is committed to offering safe and well-maintained homes. LD 1806 imposes significant hurdles without clear benefits and could worsen Maine's housing situation. We urge you to reject this bill and work towards solutions that truly enhance housing quality and accountability through effective enforcement of existing laws.

Regards,

Justin Giroux

Fairfield