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Testimony in Opposition to LD 1806 (“An Act to Create a Residential Rental Unit Registry”)

**J. Andrew Cashman on behalf of the Maine Association of REALTORS®
May 6, 2025**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development my name is Andy Cashman. I am the Founder of Resolve Government Relations. We represent the Maine Association of REALTORS®, a professional trade association established in 1936 with over 6,500 members statewide. REALTORS® protect private property rights, build Maine communities, and grow our state’s economy. Our members represent buyers and sellers involved in both residential and commercial real estate transactions. Our membership also includes industry affiliates, such as lenders, closing agents, title agents, appraisers, building inspectors, surveyors, etc. The Maine Association is chartered by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the largest trade association in the country.

The Maine Association of REALTORS® strongly opposes LD 1806. This bill would mandate annual registration of residential rental units except for units provided as subsidized housing or registered on a municipal registry. The Secretary of State would maintain a publicly accessible registry with this information. The bill would also prohibit a property owner from serving a notice of termination to a tenant for nonpayment of rent if the property owner’s rental unit is not registered.

The Maine Association of REALTORS® is committed to the protection and preservation of private property rights and the ability for property owners to use their property how they choose. Housing providers in Maine are operating businesses that provide essential rental housing. One of the fundamental tenets of private property rights is the freedom to contract. By mandating registration, the state is creating additional regulations to the use of private property and in turn the service of providing rental housing. A statewide rental registry would be an impediment to housing providers that would negatively impact the ability and desire of the private sector to meet the needs and demands for our state’s housing needs.

Additional requirements add to the cost of housing over time. LD 1806 proposes an unspecified registration fee for some properties and ultimately, every dollar spent on the development and maintenance of a statewide registry is another dollar not spent on increasing the supply of much-needed housing. Furthermore, a statewide rental registry is redundant for some municipalities where ordinances around registering your property are already in place. This would result in duplicative regulatory fees for housing providers serving those communities. For most housing providers in our state, this additional expense coupled with existing and other proposed fees for housing providers could be a tipping point for their business where it becomes no longer feasible to continue providing rental housing. If passed, this bill would be a deterrent to existing housing supply and to the development of additional rental housing inventory. LD 1806 would hurt Maine communities and create more disruption than benefit in the rental marketplace.

MAR agrees all individuals should have opportunities to live in safe and decent housing that is affordable to them. For that reason, we continually advocate for adoption and integration of housing policies that



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respond to the individual and collective housing needs of our society. A rental registry would not solve our state's housing concern, it will create additional barriers that impact housing availability and affordability. Instead of proposals that challenge and overregulate private property rights and expose housing providers to inequitable policies that could put them out of business, we encourage support for measures that serve to provide tangible solutions to our state's housing needs. These include measures that encourage the development of housing of all types, rental assistance programs, and continued tax incentives that serve to make housing more attainable for Mainers.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1806. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Additional Considerations:

MAR understands an amendment was released today, May 5, 2025 at 10am in advance of the public hearing that proposes a resolve and the formation of a work group to evaluate potential solutions regarding the creation of a residential rental registry. We continue to oppose LD 1806, and its amendment presented and feel that increased representation of housing providers should be considered in the composition of the work group to ensure a more comprehensive approach to rental housing policy is examined.