

Charles Ellis  
Westbrook  
LD 1927

Honorable Chairs and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to LD 1927. As a landlord from Westbrook, I am deeply concerned about the bill's overly stringent requirements, which impose near-impossible standards on landlords and risk exacerbating Maine's housing crisis.

LD 1927's provisions, including a mandatory landlord registry, expanded disclosures, and heightened habitability enforcement, place undue burdens on small-scale landlords like myself. While I support safe and fair housing, the proposed registry and compliance requirements demand significant time, financial resources, and administrative effort that many landlords—particularly those managing one or two properties—cannot realistically meet. For example, the registry's reporting obligations could require costly legal or administrative assistance, diverting funds from property maintenance or tenant services.

Moreover, the bill's rigorous enforcement of habitability standards under Title 14, §6021 assumes a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to account for the practical challenges of maintaining older properties, especially in rural Maine. Addressing issues like mold or heating repairs often involves supply chain delays or contractor shortages, yet LD 1927 risks penalizing landlords for factors beyond their control. This could discourage property owners from renting, reducing Maine's already limited rental housing stock. In 2023, Maine's rental vacancy rate was below 5%, and further regulatory pressure may drive landlords to sell or convert units to short-term rentals, worsening affordability.

Rather than punitive oversight, I urge the Committee to consider alternatives, such as tax incentives for habitability upgrades or streamlined mediation for tenant-landlord disputes. These would balance tenant protections with the realities of property management. LD 1927, as written, threatens to overburden landlords, stifle housing supply, and harm the very communities it aims to help.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request that you vote against LD 1927 or amend it to address these concerns.