



COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

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January 22, 2026

Honorable Committee Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

My name is Pat Schwebler, and I am Co-Director of the New England Resident Owned Communities program at the Cooperative Development Institute. I am speaking in favor of LD 2149, with a focus on Sec. 5. 10 MRSA 9093 sub-5: Exempting Resident-Owned Communities.

Rent stabilization is not needed for resident-owned communities. The organizational structure of this form of affordable housing is protected by its bylaws and policies, and the members who volunteer to uphold a cooperative not-for-profit housing model.

All members have a say and a vote in the process, much like in a small town. The board, which is elected by the membership, holds monthly public meetings, and all members are invited to attend. Public comment is heard and encouraged during the open forum session at every meeting, and the budget is prominently featured in the board's public meeting schedules. Throughout the year, any infrastructure issues that are raised by the community are brought up in a public forum and openly discussed. The board considers these issues, increasing costs, and the long-term capital improvement plan when creating its draft budget. The board presents it to the membership, and members vote on it during the annual meeting.

When LD1723 was introduced in April, it contained an exemption for resident-owned communities, as the focus was on for-profit entities. LD 2149 will address the exemption and help reduce the workload for the volunteer boards and members who have been working diligently to control their rents since the day they became resident-owned. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of the state of Maine.

Thank you.

Pat Schwebler

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