



**Testimony of Liza Fleming-Ives**  
On behalf of the Genesis Community Loan Fund  
Before the Committee on Taxation

In support of LD 554, "An Act to Encourage Resident-owned Communities and Cooperatives and Preserve Affordable Housing Through Tax Credits"

March 5, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and honorable members of the Taxation Committee.

My name is Liza Fleming-Ives. I'm the executive director of the Genesis Community Loan Fund. Genesis is a certified nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution—a CDFI—working throughout Maine to bring financing together to create solutions to the affordable housing crisis. We provide loans and expert guidance to support the development of new housing and the preservation of existing affordable homes.

Mobile home communities around the state provide an important affordable housing option for many Maine families. Maine has over 460 mobile home communities, home to around 19,000 households. In most cases the residents own their homes but rent the lot from a park owner.

What's deeply concerning is that these communities are vulnerable to ownership changes that can lead to steep rent increases or changes in use. Loss of these communities to out of state corporate investor ownership is threatening the ongoing affordability of housing for hundreds of Mainers.

Resident-ownership of mobile home communities, on the other hand, offers stability and long-term housing affordability. Maine lawmakers took an important step in 2023 by requiring owners of mobile home communities to notify residents when they intend to sell, giving residents an opportunity to form a cooperative and make an offer. Since then, two resident groups have successfully purchased their communities, joining 10 others that existed before the new notification law.

Last October residents of Blueberry Fields Cooperative in Brunswick kept 278 homes affordable by working together to purchase what is now the largest resident-owned mobile home community in Maine.

Two weeks ago, the residents of Cedar Falls Mobile Home Park in Bangor purchased their 129-home community, with plans to add over 70 additional homes.



COMMUNITY LOAN FUND

As one community resident recently said, “Now I don’t have to worry about someone coming in, buying the land and kicking us all out. I don’t have to worry about a huge rent increase or not having a place to go.”

Unfortunately, not all resident groups that come together to make an offer are given the chance to purchase their community. Owners must consider resident offers, but they can still choose private buyers, even when the resident offer is equal to or better.

By creating a tax benefit for owners who choose to accept an offer from their residents, LD 554 would provide a small but significant incentive for owners to work with resident groups.

Passing LD 554 will help more communities achieve resident ownership, giving residents a fair shot at purchasing their land while benefiting willing sellers.

The sale of mobile home communities to residents is proving to preserve a vital source of affordable housing. I urge you to support this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I’d be happy to answer any questions.