

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR “FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL” LEGISLATION:

As President of Mountainside Community Cooperative, I would like to speak in favor of the “First Right of Refusal” legislation for manufactured housing communities.

Currently, one in five manufactured housing parks in the state of Maine are owned by out-of-state investors with large portfolios. This trend is on the rise, turning communities into big business. As captive clients in a newly purchased park, community members often end up paying the price. Depending on the plans of new owners, the very ability to remain in their homes is often jeopardized.

Our 55 + community of 52 owner occupied homes located in Mid-Coast Maine was fortunate. Located on premium coastal real-estate we were vulnerable to many forms of development. The owner cared for the future of the park that he had owned and maintained for over 25 years and for its residents who had chosen the location to stabilize their retirement years. He offered the current residents the option to purchase the park at a fair market value.

Many community meetings later the residents of Mountainside had organized to become a not-for-profit corporation, set up governance, form a management team and obtain financing. On December 11, 2019, we became owners of the land beneath our homes.

What does that mean?

- Permanent tenancy based on carefully drafted bylaws and rules.
- Stability of monthly lot fees based only on the actual cost of maintaining the property and saving for future capital improvements.
- 52 homes occupied by responsible homeowners and taxpayers.

This legislation gives other Maine manufactured housing communities the same opportunity we were given, to have a voice in their own futures if they choose to take the initiative. It is also a strong step toward the stabilization of this valuable form of unsubsidized low to moderate income housing.

Thank you for your consideration.

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