

Blum, Alyster

From: Nan Solomons <nan.solomons@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 5, 2025 9:11 PM
To: Cmte HED
Subject: Please oppose LD 1806

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This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Dear Members of the Committee,

We write to express our concern regarding the proposed legislation establishing a statewide residential rental unit registry, LD 1806. As owner-occupant landlords of a two-family home in Portland, we are already subject to municipal licensing requirements, including annual occupancy reporting and fee payments to the City of Portland. This bill would impose an additional layer of administrative and financial burden on small-scale landlords like us.

The objectives of the bill—centralized data collection and enforcement—can be more efficiently achieved by leveraging existing municipal registries. A coordinated system in which the state obtains data from municipalities would reduce redundant data entry, minimize inconsistencies, and lessen the administrative workload for both property owners and government agencies.

We have already found existing municipal regulations burdensome. As senior citizens, we have spent the last 11 years providing care to five family members who lived out of state. At one point, a relative recovering from multiple hospitalizations stayed in our apartment for several months. Later that same year, a nephew who was between jobs also lived with us temporarily. Because we now rent on a short-term basis, we were able to support our family during times of need. For years prior, we maintained long-term rental arrangements and had positive experiences as responsive and respectful landlords. However, the increasing complexity and volume of Portland's regulations—combined with our caregiving responsibilities—have made it unlikely we will return to long-term renting. Instead of adding more regulations, we urge the state and municipalities to collaborate with property owners, renters, realtors, advocates for the unhoused, and other stakeholders to develop both crisis response and long-term housing strategies. More regulation is not a solution to the housing crisis; it is a temporary fix that risks driving small landlords out of the market. Rather than offering homes, owners like us will turn to other uses—such as hosting family or offering community-based workshops—where we can contribute in different ways.

We are also deeply concerned about the bill's potential to expose landlords' personal contact information to the public. If the registry is publicly accessible, what measures will be in place to protect landlords from unsolicited inquiries, especially when units are already occupied?

Additionally, we question the enforcement mechanism proposed in the bill, which prohibits eviction for nonpayment of rent if a unit is not registered or within 120 days of registration. While tenant protections are essential, the bill does not offer a corresponding mechanism to address violations by tenants—such as property damage, unauthorized occupants, or lease violations. This imbalance suggests a punitive approach to landlords, particularly those like us who rent on a month-to-month basis and actively maintain our property and relationships with tenants.

We urge the Committee to reconsider the current draft of this bill. It does not account for the diversity of rental housing providers in Maine and disproportionately burdens small, owner-occupied landlords. We respectfully ask that the Committee either reject this bill or substantially revise this bill via a committee of stakeholders (property owners, renters, realtors, advocates for the unhoused tenants, social workers, local and state officials) not just legislators, to ensure a more balanced and equitable approach.

Sincerely,

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