

*Testimony in Opposition to LD 1016 - An Act to Establish the Manufactured Housing Community and Mobile Home Park Preservation and Assistance Fund*

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Sandra Hinkley. I am the Owner of Maple Hill Estates, a manufactured home community in Mechanic Falls. I have owned this community for over 10 years, and my parents owned it for nearly 20 years before me. For decades, my family and I have supplied affordable housing to thousands of families. Previously, I also owned Country Lane Homes in Lewiston, a retailer of manufactured housing that was in business selling affordable housing since 1984, until we closed our doors last summer. I am also a licensed Realtor in Maine for the past 18 years.

Our community is home to a variety of family dynamics, we have first time homebuyers, young families, empty nesters, and retirees all enjoying a peaceful way of life in our community.

Our community is a benefit to Mechanic Falls by offering affordable housing to our 110 families. We offer a great tax base for the Town, without their need to maintain our roads, water, sewer or electric systems. If our community were to close and be changed to a different use, the Town would have a significant loss of tax revenue, but more importantly it would lose 110 affordable housing options.

Since my time owning the property, **I have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars** in the growth and maintenance of the community. When I purchased the community in 2014, I had only 48 tenants, and had 62 empty sites. I invested thousands per site to install new cement pads and upgrade electrical where needed, and in 10 years' time I have managed to fill the community with so many first-time homebuyers and retirees because it is an affordable option. Also, since my ownership, I have installed new street lights, new water meters for every home, a new overflow parking lot, and I have repaved all the roads. I have implemented a new software that allows tenants to access and pay their rent online. Now I'm working on re-paving tenants' driveways over the next few years.

A fee like the one being proposed in LD1016, where the buyer of a manufactured home community must pay the State \$50,000 per site would negatively impact the property value itself. It would also be a deterrent to anyone looking to become a community owner. In many cases, the value of the community is not even equal to this exuberant amount. In those instances, the community owner would have a negative valuation of the property. If a community owner needs or wants to sell the community, but a buyer must pay this fee, there will be no buyer. What happens next could be many things, one of which is the property maintenance deteriorates if the current owner is unable to continue on. This is not a good situation for the many families who rely on the community owner to keep their community in good repair and a safe and peaceful place to live. This would also affect the

homeowner/tenants of the community by negatively affecting their property values as well. This is just one example of what could happen.

If this fee was implemented, in order to cover the costs at the time of sale in the future, current owners will likely start to increase lot rents to try to accumulate funds to cover this fee upon sale (as I would guess many buyers will be unwilling to pay it). At \$50,000 a lot, that will translate into quite significant increases in rent. This is a major impact on the residents, and jeopardizes the beauty of our communities and their inherent affordability going forward. And because of this, it would be a deterrent to making future improvements, knowing I would need to reserve so much money for a future sale.

If this fee was implemented, my investment in this community would be for naught. I would walk away from the table with absolutely nothing, and would likely have to go into debt myself to get a buyer.

In order to keep manufactured home communities affordable for tenants, and encourage current owners to continue with maintenance and upkeep and improvements, I strongly encourage you to vote in opposition to LD1016.

I would appreciate your vote of Ought Not to Pass on this bill. I appreciate all the work you do on behalf of Mainers and look forward to working with you in the future. I would be happy to answer any questions and to be available for the work session.