

Worumbo Estates & Worumbo Park

dba Aaron Homes

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Testimony given, in person, by Edward Wall on May 2, 2025 against LD 1723 and LD 1765 before the Housing and Economic Development Committee:

Good Morning – My name is Edward Wall. My mother and I own and operate Worumbo Estates and Worumbo Park, two mobile home communities located in Lisbon, Maine. We not only own the communities but live in them as well.

We have always tried to make our communities affordable. We've made many sacrifices personally and financially to achieve this. Unfortunately, the financial climate in the State of Maine and nationally has forced us to raise our rent. We have agonized over how to implement our rent increases. Subsequently, our rent increases have not kept up with the rising costs of running this business, maintaining infrastructure, and providing services that our tenants have come to expect. Now with rent control looming in our future, this puts my mother and I in a tough spot. Do we raise rents to a level that ensures the viability of our future at the expense of our tenants? Do we scrap our approved 39 lot expansion that would create 39 more affordable homes in our community? Do we sell our community that we have built for 52 years at a diminished return because of rent control? These are the quandaries we now face as our financial viability is under attack.

I am firmly against any type of rent control. I believe that the persons or entities making the investment should be able to establish the amount of rent they need in order to make their investment viable.

I also believe that some price gouging is going on in the industry in the State of Maine and I am firmly against that. That being said, if there were to be a compromise, I would propose that the fair way to implement rent control would be to go county by county and take all the lot rents in each county and establish an average lot rent for each county. Then the manufactured housing communities that are below the average lot rent for that county can raise their lot rent as they see fit until they reach the average lot rent threshold. At that point, the rent control would kick in and the entity would then have to abide by the parameters set forth by the law--10% every four years--or whatever numbers make sense in the end.

Another solution might be to designate 25% of each park as subsidized, much like the State does with apartment rentals, and create a State subsidy for people who qualify.

There is no doubt that there is a housing crisis in Maine. I think that if we can work together to find a good compromise, we can be a viable source of affordable housing now and for the future. These bills do not accomplish that. They discourage investment and leave the fate of the manufacturing housing community in the hands of people who don't have "any skin in the game".

I urge this committee not to enact LD 1723 and LD 1765. Not all park owners are large out-of-state corporations. There are still "mom and pop" owners like us out there who care about their communities and these bills do adversely affect all of us as well. In effect, we are being penalized for running our business the right way.

Thank you,

Edward J. Wall II