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130th Legislature

Health and Human Services Committee

Testimony Opposed to LD 819

Dear Honored Legislators:

I am writing asking you to oppose **LD 819 "An Act To Reduce Lung Cancer Rates in Maine by Requiring Testing for and Mitigation of Radon in Residential Buildings by Landlords"**.

It does not correspond to current Federal EPA guidance, which recommends retesting if the home has had major structural changes or if someone plans to occupy a level of the house lower than was previously tested (i.e. finishing a basement).

The current law achieves the goal of minimizing exposure to Radon by testing, education, and mitigation. Most rental properties and all college dormitories (because they are leased units for more than 100 days fall under this law) typically rent their units for under 2 years. The scientific link for radon related illness directly corresponds to a correlation between smoking and to **10** years of exposure to excessive levels.

Small landlords cannot afford more expenses, most of us are struggling in this economy with no ability to evict throughout Covid and borderline unethical to raise rents to cover more costs because tenants are also struggling to pay their bills. More frequent testing would be an undue burden on the landlord for both the time and money for the testing. Multi units are a retirement plan for many owners, additional costs in operations will be passed on in the form of higher rents. Can Maine afford to add one more factor to rising rents?

In addition, is the State of Maine prepared to pay for **all the public housing and dormitories to be tested every year?** Why does the State of Maine want to add such a huge financial burden upon itself (all College Dormitories and Public Housing will also need to be tested and possibly mitigated)? The average certified tester test is \$250 per UNIT. The average mitigation system STARTS at \$2,500. In a 2016 conversation with the Facilities Management Director at Portland Housing Association, they received a bid of \$40,000 for testing only for its' **public housing units**. Many of their units are primarily side by side duplexes that would require mitigation systems **for each separate unit**.

However, if the citizens of Maine decide that Radon exposure is a significant issue that needs to be addressed shouldn't this be for **all** of its citizens? Shouldn't every property upon sale be tested? Shouldn't every school and day care facility be tested? The State of Maine can't afford this course of action and neither can landlords. Educating tenants through seminars offered by landlord associations, tenant advocacy groups, and mandatory disclosures at each lease signing costs the State of Maine taxpayers nothing and will reach a larger audience.

Please OPPOSE LD 819. Thank you for your time and consideration to this matter.

Donna Hodges

Landlord

DONNA CROSSWAY HODGES
Newport

Opposition to LD 819