

House Transportation & Local Government  
 03/23/2022 01:30 PM  
 HB22-1287 Protections For Mobile Home Park Residents  
 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Kirby MacLaurin For Self	<p>My name is Kirby MacLaurin, and I live in the Animas View Mobile Home Park Co-op in Durango, CO. I urge you to pass HB22-1287. The Mobile Home Park Act of June 2020 allows park residents to bid on sale of their park, but the timeline required of residents is unrealistically short – only 2 parks have gone co-op so far.</p> <p>We benefitted from a Board of Directors unusually able to accomplish the many steps required. Yet we barely succeeded, given the requirements of due diligence.</p> <p>From 2016-2021, under 3 successive corporate owners, our lot rents increased 112%. Limiting rent increases to 3% per year is humane and crucial.</p> <p>Extending the response and bid period from 90 to 180 days is also essential – park residents usually have no idea how to begin the process, especially on top of work and family needs.</p> <p>Granting right of first refusal, and clarifying what “negotiate in good faith” means, protects the interests of otherwise unempowered resident groups. In our park, we often wondered if Seller would even respond to us after our hard work, and how we could follow up if Seller simply ignored us.</p> <p>Clarifying the triggering events and method of giving notice of intent to sell a park is crucial. The impending sale of another Durango MHP, Westside, is a case in point. This community includes many primarily Spanish-speaking low-income essential workers. Westside’s owner provided notification of sale, but only in English; many residents reported never receiving notice, greatly complicating organizing efforts. Multiple clauses of HB22-1287 add specifications, clarifications and teeth to resident protections. These clauses address the abuses regularly perpetrated against an economically vulnerable class of people who own homes where they are subject to a landlord’s whims, and captive since they cannot afford to move their homes.</p> <p>Our park suffered from corporate ownership described in this article <a href="https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/03/15/what-happens-when-investment-firms-acquire-trailer-parks">https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/03/15/what-happens-when-investment-firms-acquire-trailer-parks</a>. Our new co-op is burdened with \$2.5 million in immediate infrastructure repair needs. Might further legislation require a certain level of verifiable maintenance and investment?</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Lindie Hunt For Self	<p>I am Lindie Hunt; I live in Durango’s Animas View MHP Co-op; 1 of only 2 parks that were purchased by the residents in the 1st year of House Bill 20-1196. Our purchase succeeded because we had a core group of people, Thistle ROC, luck.</p>

	<p>HB22-1287 changes the time available to organize, find funding, &amp; make an offer. Giving the residents more information about a contract &amp; giving them (not just a public entity) first right of refusal are needed. Residents' lives are impacted by the sale which typically includes raised rents/no improvements/maintenance.</p> <p>Historically, corporate owners buy parks, collect rent &amp; defer maintenance. I personally complained 1 ½ years about a leak behind my home, meanwhile water was wasted/rents raised, in part to cover the non-billable part of the water/sewer bills. Branches have fallen through roofs because trees are not trimmed. Generally poor infrastructure is the norm. We need about \$2,500,000 in infrastructure.</p> <p>In less than a year since our purchase, many things are still in the planning stage (engineering report to replace our water/sewer &amp; pave our roads all in poor condition). Within days of closing, residents were weed eating the park. Some residents have replaced roofs, painted exteriors, there are plans for a community garden, solar garden, get togethers, community workdays, etc. We are a community now; people help their neighbors with repairs &amp; other assistance, often without any pay.</p> <p>But what about the other 78 communities which didn't succeed in purchasing their park last year? Probably their rents were raised while few if any repairs were done; &amp; those were the lucky parks! I'm sure that some parks have been converted to other uses so people had to move, often not able to move their home &amp; getting little if any compensation while the old owner made an excellent return on their investment &amp; the new owner will likely do so as well.</p> <p>I'm for investing. I'm proud to say that the rental properties that we owned over the years were improved. My husband &amp; I made a point of fixing &amp; repairing things before we took a profit.</p> <p>Given limited affordable housing in our state, every effort must be made to allow parks to be purchased by the residents. They need adequate time to organize &amp; raise funding. Owners need to be held accountable for the infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, trees, etc.) within the park, &amp; residents need first right of refusal to purchase their park. Support HB22-1287 to help affordable housing in our state.</p>
<p>Patricia Martinek For Self</p>	<p>Dear Honorable Representatives:</p> <p>My name is Patricia Martinek. I live in the Golden Hills Manufactured Housing Community (MHC) at 215 Cheyenne Street, Golden, CO 80403. I wish to express my support for HB22-1287 to expand protections for mobile home park residents.</p> <p>Colorado is facing a housing crisis, with affordable housing especially difficult to find. Mobile home parks are some of our last affordable housing available, and they provide not only just reasonable rents but the opportunity to live the American Dream of home ownership.</p>

	<p>Many of our mobile home parks are being sold to out-of-community corporations who are insensitive to the needs of their park residents. This is resulting in large rent increases, evictions, unexpected and costly lot standards, and living terms to residents that are neither affordable or reasonable.</p> <p>Golden Hills MHC has recently experienced this very thing. When our home park was put up for sale, our residents quickly formed a Board of Directors cooperative and offered to purchase the park. Our full-price offers were declined.</p> <p>Since the new company took over the park, we immediately experienced steep rental increases as well as onerous rules and regulations requiring massive changes to our homes and lifestyles. The huge rent increases are causing almost half of our families to be displaced, leaving their owned mobile homes behind and without local affordable alternative housing. We don't know where they will go. These residents (my neighbors) include veterans, Social Security recipients, disabled, elderly, low income, pensioners, students, and working families.</p> <p>For those of us remaining, we are required not just to pay much higher rents but also to modify many aspects of our homes and family circumstances at our expense and which are not needed for well-being or safety. These new rules are not in accordance with those allowed under Colorado's Mobile Home Protection Act, yet we need legal representation to settle this matter.</p> <p>Had HB22-1287 been law even a year ago, I believe our park residents would have been able to purchase our park, remain in our homes, and continue to live in our beloved Golden community.</p> <p>I urge you to support HB22-1287 to ensure that all Coloradans have the rights and protections we need to remain in safe and stable homes. Thank you.</p> <p>Patricia Martinek                  215 Cheyenne St., Lot 28                  Golden, CO 80403                  Pcmartinek@gmail.com</p>
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<p>Cynthia Wood                  For                  Self</p>	<p>When my husband and I moved into our Mobil Home at Holiday Village in Colorado Springs last August we had NO IDEA that our very expensive lot rent would continue to rise up usually every year. We are Seniors on a very limited income and can NOT afford more money to go out monthly for the lot space rent. We should have been informed about the rental amount rising. Thank you so much, Cynthia Wood</p>

<p>Kimberly Esten For Self</p>	<p>I'm a member of 9to5 Colorado who has resided at the Redwood Estates mobile home community since 2010. I am not including more identifying information in this testimony to avoid potential retaliation from my park owner. When I moved here, the lot rent was \$425 and now it's \$976. I urge you to vote yes on HB22-1287: Protections for Mobile Home Park Residents.</p> <p>This is a low income, low wage area. Mostly retired or young families. With the pandemic people lost jobs, hours were cut, and despite the moratorium they still evicted people. The company who now owns these lots have out priced most folks. The struggle to choose medications, food or rent became a desperate reality for too many like myself who through no fault of their own have fallen on hard times. At most, jobs might provide \$22 an hour as top dollar for entry level, but that is rare, and to meet the criteria to rent you must be employed three years with near perfect credit, mortgage companies ask for two standardly.</p> <p>Rent increases brought on by monopoly of developers are untenable at \$50 to \$100 every six months to a year for people whose fixed income and hourly wage is not raised to match. We need legislators to intervene and offer relief, especially while the world recovers from the pandemic financially. Thank you and please support HB128.</p>
<p>Gayla Ashton For Self</p>	<p>Dear Legislators,</p> <p>As a senior, it is extremely difficult to continue to pay bills simply to live when on a limited income. As we have experienced, prices and cost just to live have increased a great deal just this past year with no end in sight or hope for a return to previous days. This puts people, like myself, in danger of homelessness, illness, and starvation. The increases that Holiday Village requires each year for the lot rent is exponential compared even to the increase in food this year.</p> <p>If they are permitted to continue to increase the rent for our homes to sit on their land, many will become homeless and add to the appalling homeless statistic that now is higher than ever for the senior population. Please consider requiring a more appropriate method of rate increases that more closely relates to inflation and social security incomes.</p> <p>Thank you, Gayla R. Ashton</p>