

March 8, 2023

Chair Zack Stephenson
Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota Housing of Representatives
449 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Stephenson,

I want to thank you and the Members of the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House File 817.

I own a home in the city of Fridley in the Park Plaza Cooperative a resident owned manufactured home community. Our cooperative is home to 81 families currently. I am fortunate to live in one of Minnesota's ten resident-owned communities. Park Plaza became a resident-owned community in 2011 and I now serve as president of the Park Plaza Board of Directors.

Before 2011, I had to live with the same uncertainty that 45,000 Minnesota families face every day. Is this the day I receive notice that I have to move because the community is being closed? Is this the day my family finds out we are forced to leave our home, job, friends, and family? Or will it be like so many other days? A day where my neighbors and I keep asking for repairs and improvements that never happen. A day where community rules are unfairly applied. A day when rent gets raised on a whim.

But for me, today, everything is different:

- I do not fear losing my home.
- My neighbors and I make improvements to our homes knowing that it's an investment we won't lose due to decisions someone else makes.
- We also welcomed new people into our community. They are relieved to move into a community where they can feel secure.

My household budget also feels more manageable. I know that land rent will only go up if the costs of managing the community increases beyond what the community has already planned for. We are proud of the fact we manage the community well and have had no significant rent increases in the past 10 years. It's also important that you know we improve our community. We developed a playground. We replaced utility systems, roads and more worth one million dollars without raising the rent. We even built a new storm shelter/community building only raising the rent \$6.00 with full membership vote.

Buying the community wasn't easy. It was a long, hard, nerve-wracking process for the residents. It would have been easier with the type of policies proposed today in House File 817.

In closing, I – and I know the other residents of Park Plaza – sleep better at night knowing our community is ours. I ask the Minnesota Legislature to make it easier for other residents to preserve their communities as well.

Sincerely,
Natividad Seefeld
President, Park Plaza Cooperative