

Testimony of Kay Curtis
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Hello everyone, my name is Kay Curtis. I am the current President of the Board of Tri-Park Cooperative Housing Corporation located in Brattleboro. We represent what we think is the largest single development of unsubsidized low income housing in Vermont.

We are cooperatively owned and face great challenges in maintaining safe, affordable housing in the face of serious flood hazards and aging infrastructure. We have been working hard for many years to stay financially stable and plan for the future. We have invested more than \$8 million in our own infrastructure.

But we NEED help.

Tri-Park currently provides a low-income housing option for 304 households in Brattleboro. Approximately 900 people live in one of the three mobile home parks. We operate cooperatively. This represents 8% of all Brattleboro's housing units. We own and operate the largest Mobile Home Park in Vermont. We have been providing affordable housing for 30 years.

Housing in Brattleboro is very expensive. Tri-Park is one of the few options for people who cannot afford to live elsewhere.

Our 304 shareholders include:

- Young families with children working two jobs and unable to afford high rents.
- Retired people who do not have sufficient savings to be anywhere else.
- People who gave a lifetime of service to our community at minimum wage jobs, and are now living on fixed social security incomes.
- Residents with disabilities living on SSDI.
- Grandparents who are raising grand children because of the opioid addiction.
- People who are too proud to apply for assistance, which they call "hand-outs"
- But are able to move into a small mobile home and pay their own bills.

Local businesses in Brattleboro are supported by the availability of affordable workforce housing. The loss of this housing in Tri-Park would take away the housing of approximately 400 employees.

Tri-Park needs help.

We lost 29 housing sites as a result of the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene. Every rainstorm during the summer months and rise in temperature during winter months triggers panic and fear for the 42 families that own homes in the floodway. Their radio scanners are always on.

It is important to understand that if we lose more units the Cooperative will no longer be sustainable. The Cooperative's ability to provide affordable housing is dependent upon having 333 units. We currently have 304.

With assistance from the Town of Brattleboro, Tri-Park began developing a Master Plan, hiring a team of skilled professionals to look at the Park's issues from every direction. They predict that we are not going to be able to sustain our parks without outside help.

We project that it will cost about \$4 million to:

- Relocate families in danger of washing away during the next flooding event
- Upgrading the aging infrastructure to ensure the safety, health and viability of housing for 304 households -- by replacing two sewer systems in the smaller parks and one bridge.

That is beyond our capacity and we are asking for the legislature's help.

We recognize there is a significant statewide need for support for affordable alternatives. We believe that Mobile Home parks provide an affordable option for Vermonters all over the State. We encourage you to invest funds in this direction.

Thank you for your time. I'll be happy to answer any questions before passing it on to Mary Houghton, another one of our Board Members.