

**Addison Housing Works
Testimony to House Committee
on Environment**

February 14, 2025

About us

- Addison Housing Works is a nonprofit affordable housing owner, developer, and manager based in Vergennes, Vermont.
- We provide over 750 permanently affordable homes in Addison County including rental apartments, manufactured housing communities, and shared equity single-family homes and condos.
- We also offer resident services to vulnerable families and to seniors to help them age safely at home.





**Manufactured Housing Community (MHC)
Preservation through Infrastructure Investments**

Why MHC Preservation Matters

- **Critical Rural Housing Stock:** About 1 in 16 Vermonters live in manufactured homes.
 - In some towns in Addison County, it's as many as 1 in 5 (e.g. Starksboro)
- **Affordable Homeownership:** 90% of people who live in manufactured homes own their own home.
 - Median Lot Rent is about \$400 per month
 - New, energy efficient homes cost between \$100,000 and \$150,000
- **Economically Vulnerable:** estimated median income of residents is about \$40,000—less than half of Area Median Income (AMI).
- **Outdated Water Infrastructure:** many parks were built in the '60s and have not seen significant reinvestments in water infrastructure, jeopardizing not only the health of residents, but also water quality for important resources like Lake Champlain.

What's at Stake

- I am writing this email because our septic tank backed up into our house again Friday 10-22-2021. This has been happening now since we lived here over 2 years. I spent about an hour scrubbing the whole shower tub and toilet. I threw away our shower mat, curtain, and used chemical to clean with like we have been doing for over 2 years this is a costly expense. Which is ridiculous that we keep paying for. The park is responsible for this to be fixed so this needs to be fixed immediately. This is a hazard to **Me, wife, and 3 kids should not be exposed to this harmful unsanitary issue.** my health and families health so please let us know when you will have this problem fixed.

State Investment → Essential Benefits

- Due to low incomes in parks and limitations on rent increases, debt financing is not an option for MHC infrastructure upgrades in most cases.
- State funds deployed through VHCB and the ANR Healthy Homes program are key resources for MHC infrastructure projects, and help leverage millions more in federal funds.
- Successful state programs are also improving housing quality for homeowners:
- The Manufactured Housing Improvement and Repair (MHIR) program provides direct grants to residents for disaster recovery, energy efficiency, and health and safety improvements.
- The Manufactured Housing Infill Program (MHIP) helps park owners improve housing stock with new energy efficient homes on vacant lots, including funding for sitework.

Accomplishments

- **Vaughn Court Water System (2023):** capital from VHCB supported a new water supply and distribution system for nine homes in Monkton (pictured right); prior, the park suffered from frequent outages and low pressure.
- **Lindale Community Septic (2024):** State dollars from VHFA and VHCB leveraged federal money through ARPA, EPA, and USDA Rural Development to replace failing septics with a fully code compliant community wastewater system for 67 households in Middlebury—with potential for future expansion to meet the area’s workforce housing needs. \$650k state funds leveraged \$3.5MM federal funds.



What's Next

- We're currently in the preliminary engineering and design development phases on projects in all seven of our remaining parks.
- This engineering work is made possible by the ANR Healthy Homes program and the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.
- State support for VHCB and Healthy Homes will be critical to move these projects forward to construction and ensure that Addison County does not lose critical housing to failed water infrastructure.



Parting Thoughts

- Invest in programs like VHCB and Healthy Homes that fund MHC infrastructure.
- Identify opportunities within ANR to streamline processes for MHCs, which often don't fit the mold of typical municipal projects that ANR funding sources are geared toward.
 - Make MHCs categorically eligible for maximum subsidy amounts, especially within DWSRF and CWSRF programs.
 - Stay tuned for additional technical recommendations from the MHC subcommittee of HHAV.
- Continue investing in residents via MHIR but make it easier to access – for example, AHW resident services staff must spend considerable hours helping residents navigate the application process.
- Similarly, if keeping petroleum out of waterways is a priority, reform the AST replacement program with automatic eligibility for MHC residents and contract directly to carry out replacements.

Thank you

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