

THE VOICE

COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS

SEPTEMBER 2007 VOLUME 3 ISSUE 9

ALERT: PETITIONS OF SUPPORT

CoMO-CAL needs your help. Please volunteer to take a petition (found on pages 13-16) around in your park and neighborhood. Our goal is to send these "Petitions of Support" to Governor Arnold by October 1, 2007.

This is how it will work. There are three (3) petitions, two one page and one two pages (front and back). Please copy the forms found in this THE VOICE. **Combine Pages 15 & 16 into one petition.** If you have a question, please call the following:

Sewer Spills: SB589(Correa): Contact Robert Hites at 530-743-2965

Condo Conversion: AB1542(Evans): Contact Frank Wodley at 1-800-929-6061

PassThrough Fees: SB981(Padilla): Contact Ollie Kirby (Santa Maria) at 805-934-9248.

We want to send signed petitions to Governor Swarzenegger. **Canvas your area to obtain signatures in support of each bill. WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!! Please mail signed petitions to CoMO-CAL by September 20th.** We will tally the total signatures, then mail the petitions to California Governor Arnold Swarzenegger. We will report the final tallies in a future THE VOICE. These are three important bills. Please support our efforts to see that the Governor signs them!

(Please note: At the time of publishing THE VOICE for September, the legislature is in recess and the bills have not passed both the House and Senate. We want to be prepared in the event that they DO PASS and are sent to the Governor for his signature).

SB 589 (Correa) – Park Sewage Clean-up: provides HCD with the authority to require mobile-home parks to remove debris from major sewage spills from mobilehomes, park sewage systems, and permanent buildings within a mobilehome park, not simply require sanitation of such spills, as is the practice under current law.

AB 1542 (Evans) – provides that a fast track provision of the Subdivision Map Act that exempts mobile home parks converted to condominiums or subdivisions from most local subdivision map and local mobilehome rent control requirements does not apply in local jurisdictions with mobilehome park rent control ordinances.

SB 981 (Padilla) – Pass Through Fees: provides that park management may only provide for the maintenance of park common area improvements on residents through with funds acquired by rents, not "pass-through" fees in addition to the rent. The bill also only applies to rental agreements entered into, extended or renewed on or after January 1, 2008.

RETURN SIGNED PETITIONS TO CoMO-CAL. POSTMARK NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 20TH PLEASE (thank you!)

**You Don't Need Jenny Craig or Weight Watchers
Just Join Operation Reach Out (OReO) and
Help Distribute THE WHISPER**

Operation Reach Out has began. Last month CoMO-CAL sent out about 6000 fliers about the WMA, AB 1309, the new Proposition 90 and rent control. All this in a single, two sided flier. Thanks to all who have volunteered to distribute the fliers in their park. We help you keep in shape and you help your friends and neighbors know about CoMO-CAL and important issues. We will continue this program on a monthly basis—please volunteer for the September distribution.

There is still much more we can do! Please volunteer to distribute fliers in your park - we can reach many more mobilehome owners with this program - at least 50 times more than we reach today with THE VOICE! And knowledge brings power and unity. To volunteer, just give us a call at 800-929-6061. We will send enough fliers for your park and instructions.

Why is OReO so important? Recently we had a call from Jean Warnus, an advocate for mobilehome owners in Santa Rosa, asking for our assistance to support AB1542. Unfortunately our answer had to be “we are NOT organized, especially to get information out to many very quickly. We do not, as yet, have an email network. But we are working on it and you can see we now are helping Jean, Ollie, and Bob get their petitions out to you.

Mobilehome owners need to know we are there for them. They also need to know that many park owners are working hard to eliminate rent control, interfere with sales, and take advantage of us. As a consequence of Jean’s call, we have now organized.

A Personal Note

CoMO-CAL has evolved into much more than THE VOICE. I really appreciate all those who communicate with me, sending in news articles, suggestions, attorney information, etc. This is really what CoMO-CAL is about. Networking!! Keep it up! We are making a difference with your support. Teamwork pays off!

Frank Wodley, CoMO-CAL President

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CoMO-CAL, Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to protecting the rights of mobilehome owners in the state of California.

All persons living in a mobilehome are eligible for membership on an equal basis, except management, owners and employees of owners.

THE VOICE is published monthly by the Coalition of Mobilehome Owners—California for the use of its members. THE VOICE welcomes articles of interest to mobilehome owners.

A Few Words to Help Simplify Complex Issues

We understand it is difficult, almost impossible, for you to really understand what's happening today. There are many issues that affect us all as mobilehome owners. We will try to put them in perspective. In fact most of what is going on in Sacramento is ultimately about Rent Control

Rent Control

About 25% of mobilehome owners live under rent control. Those without rent control live in constant fear of large rent increases. They are at the mercy of their park owner, simple as that.

Park owners and their representatives are working hard to lessen the grip of rent control or eliminate it completely. You may say: "We have rent control here, so I don't have to worry." Our answer: Rent control is not GUARANTEED. Just today there are several threats to rent control: **the new Proposition 90** will prohibit rent control—here today, gone tomorrow. **AB1309** deals with decontrol of rents upon sale—we're written of its devastating effects. If it passes (it is now a two year bill, so it will not become law this year), those under rent control could lose tens of thousands of dollars in equity. In fact, "condo conversions" below are more about RENT CONTROL than offering residents a piece of the rock.

Park initiated "condo conversions."

Please read this if you read nothing else in this issue of THE VOICE. A "condo conversion" has NOTHING TO DO WITH TAKING YOUR MOBILEHOME OFF YOUR SPACE AND BUILDING CONDOMINIUMS. It is a way to "divide up the park" into separate spaces. Nothing is changed in the park, only the ownership of some spaces. Others who do not participate continue to rent.

This issue is complex. **The bottom line is that it is a "sham."** It breaks rent control and that's a big reason why park owners are initiating condo conversions. Also lots are offered at whatever price the park owner wants to charge. Please read the article on Page 4&5 by Jan Beatz, Santa Cruz County Supervisor. It explains condo conversions. CoMO-CAL promotes park ownership by residents, but ownership through a condo conversion is not the way to own a "piece of the rock."

You may say: "Condo Conversions won't affect me." Our answer: "It may not affect you today, or tomorrow, or the next day. But your park owner COULD decide over night to do a condo conversion in your park—yes OVER NIGHT! And it is happening more and more, across the state. It is even happening in non-rent control areas (Mountain Springs in Banning for example). Why? Because the park owners make lots of money with a condo conversion. To date we estimate more than 40 parks are being converted. We feel more and more park owners are going to catch the conversion fever.

Please read the article on the next page by Jan Beatz, a supervisor in Santa Cruz. She writes about the sham conversion—she is talking about "**condo conversions.**" **This is a serious threat to our way of life. Please be aware.**

Watch Out for the "Sham Conversion Law" By Supervisor Jan Beatz

Today I will be writing about a couple of mobile home park issues that are currently happening in Santa Cruz County. The first concerns a state law that was passed several years ago that gives the appearance that it supports residents buying lots in their mobile home parks. However, there are many concerns about the way this law actually works. In fact, it has at times been called the Sham Conversion Law since it is so onerous for some residents of any given park.

The following quote is from a recent flyer sent by the owner of a mobile home park to the residents of that park inviting them to a meeting to discuss a way to purchase their mobile home park. "A concept in living that turns ownership and control of mobile home parks over to the residents of the mobile home park in which they reside. Resident ownership is an opportunity to choose what is best for your household and benefit from increasing land values."

Well, not necessarily.

Under state law (California Government Code Section 66427.5), after the parcels are created, the lots will be offered for sale to the resident who occupies the space. As far as we know, the price would be whatever the park owner wants to charge.

At this point, every mobile home park resident will fall into one of three categories. Each category is very different and each will completely change your housing situation from what it is today. For the residents who are willing and able to pay the asking price, they would own the individual lot on which their coach stands.

The second category of residents would be those who fully qualify as "Lower Income." Those residents would have their new rents at a level that is relatively close to what it is now. However, in a

very important change from the current rent control system, this rent control system only applies as long as they own their mobile home.

When they are no longer occupying the space because they need to move, they pass on or are somehow evicted by whoever owns the lot, the space rent then reverts to "Market Rate," and any value that they had in the ownership of their coach on that lot could be largely erased.

The third category is those individuals who can't qualify as fully "Lower Income" but they still can't afford to pay the price set for their lot by the park owner. For these people, their rents will be increased to "Market Rates" over a four-year period. Unfortunately, like the "Lower Income" group, the value of their coach or manufactured home will also be threatened.

Lower Income Residents in Particular Peril

As you can see, this could work for some park residents, but the main effect of the law is to create vacancy de-control over a period of several years. For some people this comes quicker — within four years or so. Some low income residents can live at their parks and not see the rents go up, but due to the effects of this law, should they have to sell — for instance to go into a nursing home or to go into the hospital — their mobile homes could be almost worthless. This is because owners can set any price they choose and the protection of rent control will be gone with that sale.

Section 66427.5 was amended in 2002 in an attempt to help protect residents from sham conversions. While this more recent legislation adds a requirement that the park owner survey park residents, there are still many loopholes and a lot of chances for people to buy into rhetoric, which really will be of no help to them at all and could actually harm them financially.

This is a very complicated issue and it is very easy

to get somewhat duped with a lot of positive rhetoric that won't actually have the desired outcome for most people. I believe it would be a good idea for people who are presented with such an idea by their park owner to not do anything in haste but rather to consult with an expert before expressing interest in this program.

If you are interested in hearing more about this issue, I would invite you to attend the meeting. I would hope that the Commission will decide to send out some kind of written educational material to park residents so that they are aware that while the program can work out for some people who have the money to purchase the property under their mobile home, it can be a catastrophe for everyone else because the ultimate result will be the complete elimination of the County's rent control protections.

If you have further questions, please feel free to call my office at 831-454-2200 or Lee Ann Shenkman in the office of the County Counsel here at the County government Center at 831-454-2040.

Replacing Your Older Mobile Home

The other issue I am writing about today is one that I believe is more positive. Santa Cruz County is going to have a test program that would allow us to make loans to people who want to replace their older mobile home with a newer model.

As it is now, if you want to upgrade your mobile home, it can be difficult to arrange financing. Under this new program, the County would finance that purchase. In return, the person getting the loan would have to enter into an agreement that at whatever point they decide to sell their home, it would be sold at a less than market rate to keep the mobile home in circulation as an affordable unit.

We really have no idea how many people might be interested in this program, which will be small as it starts out. However, if you think it might be of benefit to you and you are interested in changing out your mobile home but financing is an issue, you can call Eric Schapiro at 831-454-5166 to find out more information about this program.

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Purchase your Park

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EDITORS NOTE: The following article is about "condo conversions." In the case of Hollywood Beach Mobile Home Park, as is the case in other condo conversions, residents don't know the price of their lots until very late in the process. As per the article on page 4-5 "... owners can set any price they choose and the protection of rent control will be gone with that sale." Park owners and their representatives do a terrific job "selling" the virtues of condo conversions; however those who have done their homeworkcall (it) the Sham Conversion Law since it is so onerous for some residents of any given park.

Please note also, this can happen in YOUR PARK at anytime. Be prepared! Do your homework!

Mobile home park dwellers say new appraisal doubles purchase price
Residents rip conversion cost
(edited by CoMO-CAL because of space)

By Charles Levin (Contact) Sunday, August 12, 2007

It almost seemed too good to be true: Pay about \$120,000 for a lot at the Hollywood Beach Mobile Home Park, walking distance from the ocean and million-dollar beachfront homes. But that's what tenants of the Oxnard park believed when the owners offered to sell lots there back in 2004. After the owners commissioned a new appraisal in February this year, prices for most lots nearly doubled, and tenants cried foul.

Originally, both sides agreed the price of a lot would be the average of two appraisals, said tenant P.J. Szewzuk, a retired real estate agent. Under that scenario, from appraisals in 2004 and 2005, prices ran from \$117,000 to \$150,000. But after a third, newer appraisal, the lots would run from \$215,000 to \$250,000, Szewzuk said. Szewzuk and others say the McGraths haven't played fair. "I think it's called bait-and-switch," said Szewzuk, who called the new appraisal "bogus."

Hollywood Beach is one of many parks in California where owners want to sell off individual lots "condo" style. The conversions allow tenants to own the land they once rented and common areas like pools and clubhouses. Park owners tout the deals as a win-win that allows tenants to cash in on

real estate holdings and achieve home ownership.

Critics blast such conversions as a way to bust rent-control laws in mobile home parks — Ventura County's last bastion of affordable housing
Family defends appraisal

Terry Aggeler of Santa Barbara, managing partner for the McGrath family, sees it differently, adding The McGraths will also lend money to low-income tenants and "lower-intermediate" tenants, the latter at 5 percent interest, Aggeler said. He could not say what income would define the second group.

"We will help considerably financially, but I am not helping the guys that have a lot of bucks," Aggeler said. "And they're the ones that are stirring up a lot of (stuff). Many of these people have two and three homes."

Problem exists elsewhere

In February, the county Board of Supervisors agreed to back pending state legislation that would give local governments authority to approve or reject the park conversions. Assembly Bill 1542 would also mandate all local rent control laws apply to mobile home park tenants who can't buy lots.

Hundreds of tenants from the Ojai Oaks Village mobile home park, whose owners also want to convert the property, packed the board chamber to support the bill. The bill has been passed by the Assembly and awaits a vote in the Senate.

Myths about Rent Control by Attorney Ken Carlson

Boogie-man propaganda that landlords want you to blindly accept:

Over 25 years in California, Rent Control has proven itself to be the only means of controlling the inflationary spiral of rents ruining our economy. None of the evils predicted by its opponents have come true. Rents and rental conditions in uncontrolled areas have gotten worse. As though the public would believe anything, anti-rent control groups repeat the same myths.

- **“Rent Control Doesn’t Work”**

This is a popular slogan because it explains nothing. Rent control certainly keeps rents down, which is why the opponents oppose it. Rent Control never pretended to be a panacea. It is especially effective without vacancy decontrol.

- **“Let the Free Market solve the problem”**

Having tenants organizing for rent control IS the free market: a consumer revolt, like a boycott. The market forces have had 25 years to solve the housing crisis. They built condos, not apartments. Supply failed to meet demand. Time for results.

- **“Home Prices will Fall”**

In 1990-2000, local home prices in uncontrolled cities fell while those in rent controlled cities rose dramatically. Rent control helps tenants save up the down payment, raising demand [and therefore the price] for houses. Only highly desirable cities need rent control, to maintain economic balance in the community. Rent Control give a city prestige.

- **“If rents go up, richer tenants move in.”**

Rents are going up everywhere, not just in one building, so why move? Tenants pull in their belts, instead. Our median income has not increased along with rising rents. Our stores lose sales to our renting population, who pay more and more rent.

Landlords 1, Merchants 0. Do our merchants need this?

- **“Neighborhoods will deteriorate”**

Without rent control, our city’s deterioration needs Building Inspectors to force landlords to fix their buildings, not being paid to look the other way. Landlords without rent control lack incentive: they get higher rents without making repairs.

- **“Rent Control Brings in the bad element”**

Rent control stabilizes neighborhoods. Tenants can form a Neighborhood Watch. Without rent control, crime has risen. Landlords can always evict problem tenants, even under rent control. Rent controlled Beverly Hills, Palm Springs, Santa Monica, and San Francisco have not invited the "bad element"

- **“Rent Control destroyed Santa Monica”**

Did it really? In what way? Will the landlords take us on a tour of the destruction? No, because it's never been true. If anything, State imposed vacancy decontrol has removed much of the affordable housing there. Landlords did that.

- **“Landlords will go broke, lose life savings”**

By our Constitution, rent control must permit ALL expenses plus a decent profit from rents. It is beyond Blue Chip investment. Landlords in rent controlled California cities have had 25 years to divest, but they haven't. Why is that?

Note: This article was written by attorney Ken Carlson. His contact information is as follows:

P.O. Box 2417, Idyllwild, CA. 92549

951-659-6043, fax 951-659-6084

Mr. Carlson is versed in tenant/landlord issues as well as the MRL.

Investor, ROC or NHC: Which owns your Park? Why should you care?

Which of these entities owns your park? Do you know? *How* your park is owned makes a big difference in your economic security, home value and quality of life. Take a look at these three types of ownership and understand the differences.

Investor Ownership. Most of you who are reading this live in an “investor owned” park. It’s easily the most common form of park ownership in California. Investors buy, own and sell mobilehome communities to make money. Some are “mom and pop” operators; others are real estate investment groups or large corporations. All of these investors want to make a “profit.” That’s not a crime. But some owners are better park operators than others.

“For Profit” owners invest in mobilehome parks for many reasons. Affordable housing is in short supply in California, so parks are usually full. The owners get a steady cash flow from rents. The value of the park’s real estate goes up over time. When an owner sells the property, he usually makes a profit. Most of the time, he sells it to another investor, and the cycle continues.

And where do you, the mobilehome owner, fit into this picture? Well, legally speaking, you are a “tenant.” Your mobilehome (which is probably your most valuable personal asset) sits on a “space” that you rent from the owner. You have no ownership in the park’s real estate. If things get bad, it’s nearly impossible to move your home someplace else. Your only option is to sell your home and leave the park. Then, where would you live?

As a tenant, you have rights given to you by state and local law. But for all practical purposes, your park owner *controls* the park where you live. Unless there is a rent stabilization ordinance in your area, the owner decides how much rent you’ll pay each month. He can raise rents whenever he

wants, to whatever the market will bear. How the property is maintained, and what gets fixed (or not) is controlled by the park owner.

How you are treated depends on the owner’s management philosophy. If your owner manages the park well, you are fortunate. But if your owner is not fair or considerate – your life isn’t so good. Whatever your situation, the investor-owner *controls* the park. You and your neighbors don’t.

Ownership by ROC: Some mobilehome parks in California are owned by a “ROC.” This stands for “Resident Owned Corporation.” In these communities, the homeowners first formed an association. They bought membership shares in their association to raise some capital. Then, they found financing and bought the park *for the benefit of the homeowners*. Of course, this required an owner who would sell the property to them at a fair price. Many homeowner groups, even in low-income parks, have organized and financed these “resident buy-outs.”

After the ROC owns the park, things get better for the homeowners. Again, it’s a matter of *control*. When the homeowners own the park, *they* control its management and rules. They decide which improvements are necessary. They select a property management company to manage the park. If that company doesn’t do a good job, the homeowners can fire it and hire a new one. That’s something you could never do with your current “investor” owner!

When mobilehome owners buy their park through a ROC, there other advantages such as increased home values and stabilized rents. One of the best benefits is *they* take control of *their* housing situation.

ROC’s should not be confused with “subdivisions.” In a subdivision, the park’s home sites are made into “lots” or “parcels.” Then, these are offered for sale individually to the homeowner-

ers. In many cases, an owner-initiated subdivision is actually an attempt by the owner to “get around” local rent control. To understand mobilehome subdivisions, see articles in the February 2007 issue of *The Voice*.

Ownership by NHC. “NHC” stands for “nonprofit housing corporation.” These are sometimes called “affordable housing” corporations. But what exactly are they?

These companies buy mobilehome parks, and then run them as “nonprofit” businesses. They can do this because they’re incorporated under California law as “nonprofit” entities. They’ve also been given “nonprofit status” by the IRS and State’s taxing authority.

NHC’s usually put “no money down” to buy a mobilehome park. The purchase is 100% financed through municipal bonds issued by the city where the park is located. When the city approves the bonds, the NHC uses the proceeds to buy the park from its current owner. Sometimes, cities will also make loans or grants (money that does not need to be repaid) to help a NHC buy a park property. Often, NHC’s acquire properties from “investor” owners. Sometimes, a NHC will buy a mobilehome park that is already owned by a city.

To get financing help from a city, a NHC promises to stabilize rents in the park it wants to acquire. It promises this in writing to the city in a “regulatory agreement.” The NHC also promises to manage the park properly. The goal is to preserve the park as an affordable housing resource for the community.

How do NHC’s earn money? They own the park over the long-term, charging fees for managing it. This is their main source of revenue. A NHC may also charge “transaction fees” when it acquires a mobilehome park.

Who controls the park after the sale? Always re-

member: the *owner* controls the park. NHC’s *own* their parks, so *they control* them as well. NHC’s promise that the homeowners will have input into park operations, improvements, etc., *but the NHC makes the final decisions about how the park is run.*

Homeowners should be concerned if they discover that a NHC is interested in buying the park where they live. That’s because all NHC’s are not the same. Some listen to the homeowners, and maintain and improve the park property. Other NHC’s make promises they can’t or won’t keep, just to get ownership and control of a park. Remember, there is much money at stake here. If it can acquire the park, the NHC will be paid to manage it for many years.

Here is some good news: the homeowners often have the power to stop the buyout of their park by a “bad” NHC. This is because a city won’t support a NHC if it believes the NHC in question is a “bad operator.” And without city support, the NHC can’t get financing to buy the property. Mobilehome owners should help city officials investigate the track record of any NHC that tries to buy the park where they live. If they don’t, they may find their park owned and controlled by a NHC that doesn’t keep its promises.

Summary. It makes a difference who owns your park, because *control* follows ownership. Every homeowner group I have worked with on a “park purchase” project has said, “let’s first try to buy our park as a ROC, so we will really own it and control it.” Today, a ROC purchase is the only practical way mobilehome owners can get true ownership of their park. It makes good business sense to try this approach first.

David Loop is a real estate attorney and past homeowners’ association president at resident-owned Aptos Knoll Park, near Santa Cruz. You can ask him questions by sending an e-mail to dloop1@sbcglobal.net, or calling 831-688-1293.

News From Around The State

Banning: Mountain Springs to sell lots

<http://www.recordgazette.net/articles/2007/07/31/news/03news.txt>

By Larry Rand
Record Gazette

Mountain Springs, a Banning manufactured home rental park for seniors that has generated numerous complaints from residents, is converting to private lot ownership. (Ed. Note: a condo conversion??

In a well attended meeting recently held at the Church of the Nazarene (because Mountain Springs has no clubhouse), attorney C. William Dahlin of Santa Ana announced plans by Mountain Springs Manufactured Home Community owner Ray K. Farris II to offer current residents of the park a chance to own their lots. “I would expect the price to be somewhere in the vicinity of \$100,000.

Under the new system, residents could continue to rent land or choose to own their own lot. A homeowners association, with each lot owner having a vote in how the park is run, would govern Mountain Springs.

Dahlin said that real estate appraiser John Neet, a specialist in mobile home prices, would value the properties before a lot sale plan was submitted to the state department of real estate. Dahlin expected Neet's appraisal in about a month and thought specific terms for lot purchases by current residents would “come at the end of August or in September.”

In other words, residents would be buying the land “as is.” Both the lot sales and the formation of a homeowners association bring other challenges to the residents of Mountain Springs.

Modesto: A Roller Coaster Ride

by Frank Wodley

Our friends in Modesto are continuing their fight for rent control for the City of Modesto. If you will recall, we printed the following on the front page of THE VOICE for May 2007:

“Sally Studer and a handful of dedicated ladies make up the Stanislaus County Mobile Home Owners Advocates. They have been working day and night for months. Their goal: rent control for mobile home owners in Stanislaus County. But an eleventh hour “deal” between representatives of Equity Lifestyle (Sam Zell’s group) and the county supervisors resulted in a unanimous vote against rent control. (Article next column)

So what does this mean? The ordinance had a roll-back provision which meant some mobilehome owners could afford to stay. Now they must certainly pack up and leave. Sally is one of the estimated 400 whose lives are now turned up side down. And where will they go?

ELS met with the supervisors, behind closed doors, without any mobilehome representatives or their attorney present. They offered to try a new “hardship” policy. In our opinion, too little, too late. Rents will eventually climb to “market,” with the park owner essentially totally controlling rents.”

Today it looks like the residents of Modesto will get some rent protection. Unfortunately it really is too late for many, including those hard working ladies who fought for all other mobile home owners. They will be forced to move! It is very sad.

Editor's Note: Think our problem just occur in California? Nope! This is a WORLD WIDE problem. Here is an interesting article from BBC News in the UK. Mobile home owners have to fight for their rights also!!

New rights for mobile home owners in the United Kingdom?

By Melanie Abbott Producer, Radio 4's Face the FactsStory from BBC NEWS:Published: 2007/08/02
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/business/6926065.stm>

An investigation by the BBC has found that legislation designed to improve the situation of 200,000 mobile homeowners around Britain has in many instances failed to make any difference. People living in mobile homes on mobile home parks - and there are around more than 1600 dotted around the UK - are in the unusual position of owning their own home but not the land it sits on. That belongs to the site owner to whom they pay ground rent. They also need his or her permission to be able to sell their home. And sometimes that permission has not been forthcoming, with claims that landowners are blocking sales of mobile homes, making it impossible for owners to realise their asset.

New rights?

The Amendment to the Mobile Homes Act 1983 came into force in England last October. In the government's own words, it was designed to tackle "rogues" who have entered the mobile homes industry. But the legislation has done nothing to tackle the problem of blocked sales. .

Bigger profits

Although site owners get 10% commission on any home sold on their site, there are big profits to be made in selling new homes. The manufacturers' price for a new home can be as little at £29,000. But manufacturers only sell through site owners. By the time a home is in place on a park it is likely to cost double that, despite the fact that the site owner will have benefited from a discount from the supplier.

Colin Packman, from the Park home residents alliance, which was set up five years ago to campaign for better rights for mobile home owners, says there is a clear incentive for site owners to get rid of old

homes. "That's where they make the real money. Look at any brochure and you will see them advertising 'new development' everywhere. "They want to get the old homes off because they know that new ones will be more profitable," he said.

Site owner Christopher Nedic strenuously denied blocking sales and said most of the residents on his park are content. Nor, he said, does he advise potential buyers that older homes are going to be scrapped.

Tighten up

When the government was passing the new laws last year, Lord Graham of Edmonton suggested that it should include a clause to ensure site owners can't prevent sales. During the grand committee stage of the bill in the House of Lords, he suggested a rewording to add the following clause: " The owner shall not do or cause to be done anything which might adversely affect the right of the occupier to sell their mobile home, including making detrimental and unproven statements about the home, its condition or location in the park ".

However, the government declined to accept this, instead including a clause that said that the site owner is not allowed to "unnecessarily withhold his approval for a sale". The Department of Communities and Local Government still maintains that the legislation is adequate. They told the BBC that "disputes are rare as protection from rogue site owners is now better than ever before." "We have changed the law to give residents greater control over sales and have introduced new safeguards for owners from harassment," they added. But now Lord Graham is pushing hard for the law to be toughened up even further. "Undoubtedly there is a real cause for concern, because elderly frail lonely people are put in a position where they are very often bullied by the bully boys, and some site owners use unscrupulous tactic to hound and brow-beat vulnerable people," he says.

Editors Note about the Letter Below by William Constantine: CoMO-CAL received the following letter from two CoMO-CAL members, one here in Los Angeles, the other near Santa Cruz. We called and have gotten Mr. Constantine's permission to use his letter. It gives insight into the park owner's advocacy organization and the urgency for mobilehome owners to unite.

We ask you carefully read this letter and let's all work hard to pressure our Governor to sign AB1542!

CoMO-CAL thanks you for your support.

Law Office of William J. Constantine
303 Potrero Street, Building #29, Suite 104
Santa Cruz, California 95060
(831) 420-1238 Fax: (831) 480-5934

August 16, 2007

ALERT!

AB 1542 is now on the Senate floor and it will be voted on in a matter of days. WMA, the park owners' main advocacy organization in Sacramento, believes it will pass since they are conducting an all-out effort to convince Governor Schwarzenegger to veto it (after it passes the Senate and is sent to him, he will then have 30 days to veto it or it becomes law). Since the park owners have contributed substantial sums to the Governor's campaigns, we can only counter their considerable influence on him with a massive letter writing campaign.

Please make an enormous effort to get people in your park to write letters to the Governor that ask him to sign AB 1542. They should write him a new letter now even if they have already previously sent him a letter or previously sent a letter to their assemblyman and senator. They should also write him a new letter now even if they have already signed a petition since one letter is worth a hundred petition signatures and it will be separately counted by the governor's staff.

I can mail you a fact sheet that summarizes the changes that AB 1542, as amended, will now make to California's law that regulates the conversion of mobilehome parks to condominium subdivisions. It was amended so it is slightly different from its original version (it now has stronger protections than its original version).

I can also mail you a "sample letter" for individual homeowners to use. Homeowners should use the sample letter as a guide and modify it with their own words. If a homeowner does not want to write a letter that is as long as the sample letter, then they can write a very brief letter that can be as brief as simply writing; "Dear Governor Schwarzenegger: I strongly urge you to sign AB 1542 into law." Even such a short letter as that carries more weight than signing a petition or signing a form letter so it will still be very effective.

You are welcome to contact me at my above office number if you have any questions.

Will Constantine

PETITION
TO
GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZNEGGER

We, the undersigned, hereby urge your approval and signature of Senate Bill 981 (Padilla). Passage of SB981 would require management/owners of mobilehome parks to maintain existing improvements (such as roads) with funds acquired through RENT, not through pass-through fees over and above rent.

NAME (Print + Signature)

ADDRESS

DATE

1.	_____	_____
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NAME (Print + Signature)	ADDRESS	DATE
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Dear Governor Swarzenegger:

The attached petition is presented to you with a request for you to sign into law AB 1542. This legislation will offer much needed protection to the largely elderly, senior and low income residents of mobile home parks throughout our great state.

Mobile home park residents are under the ever growing assault on their financial security, health, welfare and life style because mobile home park owners are rapidly attempting to convert the rental parks into condominium units which is not an affordable option for most of the residents.

El Dorado Palms Mobile Home Park in Palms Springs, the first mobile home park to succumb to this conversion scenario, has had numerous residents displaced as they could no longer afford to reside in the park and, as park management requires all incoming residents to purchase their lots, longtime residents can do nothing more than to pack their belongings and vacate their homes. This displacement and associated stress has affected the well-being, health and, in many cases, the longevity of many seniors and other low income residents.

If AB 1542 fails to become law, potentially thousands of economically displaced residents will have extremely limited affordable housing opportunities and this situation will most assuredly generate an untold negative impact on California's fragile municipal and state supported infrastructures.

Therefore, we the undersigned California residents strongly urge your consideration of this extremely inferential and far reaching legislation.

Very sincerely yours,

California Residents for AB 1542

We, the undersigned California residents , ask you to support Assembly Bill 1542 which will give needed protection to thousands of elderly, senior and low income residents throughout California's mobile home community.

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS

DATE

OVER 60 Y/N

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The Recent Survey

If you did not return the last survey, you were not alone. Only 1% returned it. Guess you are all tired of our surveys. We did learn something from the few that replied. At least one replied that the issues written about in THE VOICE does not apply to him. Actually most issues apply to ALL OF US!

Bob Hites, CoMO-CAL Vice-President

By Frank Wodley

We are very fortunate to have Bob (Tonto) Hites on our team. In a short time he has logged several thousand miles traveling in Northern California to bring the word to mobilehome owners that CoMO-CAL is there to help them. He has spent countless hours in meeting after meeting, from one park to another, then monthly meetings in the Marysville library.

He has been confronted by a manager with a gun, another threw rocks at him. The last meeting in Marysville he was confronted by a person with a criminal history (that person was arrested on the spot by local police).

On Sunday Bob was headed to a meeting in Paradise when he was struck broadside by a drunk 16 year old driving his father's corvette. He was traveling 60 miles per hour, fleeing from the police. Bob's truck was totaled and Bob was transferred to the local hospital.

Fortunately, Bob is a tough ex Marine. He suffered only minor cuts and abrasions. Today his truck is replaced, he has a new printer and is ready and willing to travel any where!

THANK YOU BOB!!

THANK GOD YOUR OK

From Our Representative Steve Molski

in Chula Vista (San Diego)

I have been attending 2 to 3 meetings per week here in Chula Vista with the council people, housing commission, rental review commission, etc and other park reps to try to defeat the attempts of some politicians, contractors and developers to weaken our "Mobile Home Park Closure Ordinance.

This change if enacted, would literally open the door for Park Owners,to pay mobile home owners as little as \$2,000 for their units if the park was closed or sold. One woman got less than \$2,000 for her single wide, after her park went Bankrupt!

I have attended rallies and spoken to the groups, not to give up!

One of the major changes has been that the housing commission staff is now recommending a depreciated value of \$6,500 for a single wide and \$11,500 for a double wide! This is damn ridiculous! Double Wides are selling in our park for \$50,000 to \$70,000 and up!

What we are demanding, is getting, ON SITE FAIR MARKET VALUE BEFORE ANY ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN IMPENDING SALE OR CLOSURE IS REVEALED! DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU CAN'T FIGHT CITY HALL! JUST DON'T GIVE UP!

Steve Molski

(Editors Note: We thank Bob, Steve and others who work hard for all mobilehome owners. You volunteers know who you are! Without them there would be no CoMO-CAL and no hope for any of us!)

**LOS ANGELES CITY
RENT INCREASE FOR 2007**

There has been some question here in the City of Los Angeles among mobilehome owners as to the allowable rent increase for the period July 2007-June 30, 2008. **It is 5.0% this year.** And it can be calculated from the average CPI for the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Anaheim areas for a 12 month period ending September 30 of each year. It can be no lower than 3.0% and no higher than 8.0%. As you can see from the chart below, the average CPI for the period October 2005 thru September 30 2006 is 4.79%. This figure is published in November 2006 and becomes effective July 1, 2007 for the period thru June 30, 2008.

We can speculate that **the allowable rent increase for 2008 will be again 3.0%.**

FROM TO	Applies to	Oct 2003 Sep 2004	Oct 2004 Sep 2005	Oct 2005 Sep 2006	Oct 2006 Sep 2007
october	2005	2.2	4.5	5.4	2.2
november		1.7	5.2	4.4	2.7
december		1.8	4.4	4.5	3.3
january		1.8	3.7	5.4	3.2
february		1.9	3.8	5.1	3.5
march		1.8	4	4.7	3.8
april		2.3	4.8	4.7	3.5
may		3.7	4.2	5.4	2.9
june		4	3.6	5.2	2.9
july		3.8	4.1	5	
august		3.3	5.2	4.3	
september		3.3	5.8	3.4	
Total %		31.6	53.3	57.5	
Avg % in		2.63	4.44	4.79	

Editors Note: CoMO-CAL is about ideas and sharing. We thank Jim Richard of Santa Barbara for the following email suggestion regarding conversions:

Received July 1, 2007 by CoMO-CAL

Hi Frank,

Besides being a mobile home resident under rent control, I am also a real estate broker and a long-time data analyst.

There is a way mobile home residents can recoup their losses resulting from conversions, according to my real estate texts. When the residents originally bought their homes, the Realtors and sellers very likely did not disclose the dangers to rent control that have existed for a long time and SHOULD have been disclosed. If the resident bought the home less than ten years ago, then the Realtors and sellers are both liable for the losses. The resident can start by submitting a simple claim against the Realtor to the California Department of Real Estate, and will likely get some compensation just from that source. Just go to Google and type in California Department of Real Estate. Somewhere on the page you will find a link to complaint forms. I can send you a sample form that I was about to use if you need it.

If the resident gets legal counsel, the resident can likely get back all their losses, plus compensation for damages such as being displaced or outright being made homeless.

Jim Richard

Rancho Santa Barbara Mobile Home Park

805-698-6929

IF YOU HAVE EMAIL—UPDATE OUR RECORDS

We are requesting members with email addresses fill out the membership application below and send it to CoMO-CAL, P.O. Box 4821, Chatsworth, Ca. 91313. If your name and address are correct, you do not have to enter that information. We are interested in a current e-mail address and phone number. Please PRINT CAREFULLY so we are able to read the correct email address.

If your information on the mailing label is correct and you have NO E-MAIL ADDRESS, DO NOT send in another application. We thank you for your assistance.

EXPIRATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The expiration of your membership is on your mailing label (front of each THE VOICE), top right hand corner. Many members have not looked for it - please do so now. It will help you know when your renewal is due. If you have not been given proper credit for your renewals, please call us at 1-800-929-6061.

CoMO-CAL
(COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS-CALIFORNIA)
P.O. Box 4821, Chatsworth, Ca 91313-4821.

**UPDATED
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (Print Please)**

NAME: _____ Date: _____

PARK NAME: _____ SPACE #: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ ZIP: _____

APPLICANTS PHONE NUMBER (____)-_____-_____

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____

Check # _____ Amount: \$ _____ Money Order () Amount: \$ _____

MEMBERSHIP (\$15.00/12 Months, \$40.00/36 Months) Membership Dues Not Refundable.

PLEASE INCLUDE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO "CoMO-CAL" & THANK YOU FOR JOINING

MAIL TO: CoMO-CAL, P.O. BOX 4821, CHATSWORTH, CA. 91313-4821

JOIN CoMO-CAL, P.O. BOX 4821, CHATSWORTH, CA. 91313-4821

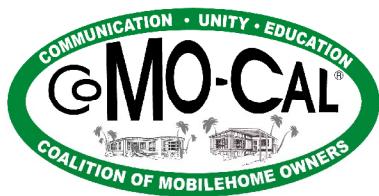
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CoMO-CAL is a non-profit California corporation dedicated to serve mobilehome owners in California.

**Our purpose is education,
communication and to unite
mobilehome owners.**

SERVICES WE PROVIDE OUR MEMBERS

1. Our newsletter, THE VOICE, filled with important information every mobilehome owner needs. Articles from around the state of California. Tips and Suggestions. Important laws explained so you can understand how you are protected. And the WHISPER, an informational flyer, sent without charge.
2. Website: **comocal.org**. Members have access to all issues of THE VOICE, attorneys who know the MRL, important links to government, advocacy groups, etc.
3. Small Claims Court Assistance: We will pay your fees up to \$30.00 and help with your paperwork. (Some restrictions apply.)
4. Questions / Problems: Our staff is ready to take your call to advise you regarding questions and problems you might have.
5. We have several attorneys to help with litigation or give advice.
6. Above all, a way to UNITE and have a VOICE.

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