



Get Your Story Out!

By Anne Anderson, GSMOL State President

Many mobilehome parks nowadays are hard to distinguish from a regular housing tract, due to the trend for bigger and more modular manufactured homes. Even in the parks where the homes are trailers and RVs, the fixed nature of these homes has encouraged their owners to upgrade them into something that more closely resembles a house.

The big difference is that in a mobilehome park, the homeowners do not own the land under their homes. And whoever DOES own the land gets to make the rules that apply to the whole community.

Homeowners often live for decades in a park where they are content with the way the place is run. And then the park is taken over by a different company. When this happens, the new company generally wants to make a bunch of new rules. The homeowners don't have any say in this, except that according to state law (Mobilehome Residency Law 798.25), homeowners will have six months to appeal against the new rules if they do not sign them. But if they don't succeed, they are stuck with them. "If you don't like it here you can leave" is not a solution that works for MH owners. In short, mobilehome owners are **captive consumers** (see LINK).

So often the only way for a homeowner to leave their park when conditions have become unbearable is to sell their home and go somewhere else, and the management is likely to make it so difficult for the homeowner to sell their home that they will end up selling it to the park for a lot less than they need to get for it.

If you are a MH owner, you probably know all these things, so why am I preaching to the choir?

Because **other people need to know this too**, and you can help them get this knowledge. Your City Council or Board of Supervisors. Your State Assemblymember

and State Senator. Real estate agents. Insurance agents. Attorneys. News reporters.

We encourage our members to **get their story out**. If you check out the **News and Announcements** crawl on our website <https://gsmol.org>, you'll find stories of how homeowners have gotten their issues into the news. We need the public to be on our side!

City Councils and Boards of Supervisors have times during their meetings when they allow **public comment**. The subject doesn't need to be on their agenda, any topic is OK to speak about. You are just bringing the needs of MH owners to their attention.

Representatives to the State Assembly and State Senate often have "curbside meetings" or other public events where their constituents can speak out about the issues they are facing. Bring a group from your park and let your state legislator know what is going on there! Or write them a letter or email – and encourage your neighbors to do the same. State representatives base their ideas for new bills on what's going on in their district – get your issues onto your Assemblymember's and/or Senator's plate for the next legislative year!

Affordable housing is a big topic on the agendas of local and state government these days. If your housing is not affordable, or if you are being chased out of your affordable housing by the actions of your management, this will be important for your local and state government to know.

To sum up: encourage your neighbors to go to City Council or Board of Supervisors meetings and speak during the **Public Comment** period. Send information to **news reporters** who typically write about injustice. If you know any **real estate agents**, point them to our attorney Bruce Stanton's article on Interference with Mobilehome Sales. Educate any **attorneys** you know about mobilehome issues so that they can be prepared to defend you and your fellow MHP residents.

The people in power can only help us if we tell them what we need!