



For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Patrick LaJeunesse
Chief Data Officer, Hive MLS
p: 910.475.8334 | e: Patrick@HiveMLS.com

Hive MLS CEO Daniel Jones proposes a ‘constitution’ for the future of MLS

*Declaration of MLS Stewardship Principles defines what an MLS is,
what it protects and what it owes the marketplace*

Wilmington, NC - September 22, 2026 – At a defining moment for the Multiple Listing Service industry, Hive MLS CEO Daniel Jones has authored a new [Declaration of MLS Stewardship Principles](#), a proposed “MLS constitution” designed to establish a common foundation for what an MLS is, what it protects and what it is responsible for as the real estate marketplace changes.

The Declaration arrives as MLS leaders confront fundamental questions involving private listing strategies, cooperation, public marketing, data ownership and licensing, artificial intelligence, consolidation and the evolving role of the MLS itself.

Rather than prescribe how an individual MLS should operate, the Declaration identifies nine principles of stewardship intended to provide a common standard that can apply across different ownership structures, governance models, markets and technologies. Its central premise is simple: A Multiple Listing Service is the steward of a nimble and trusted real estate marketplace.

“This was never a solo effort,” Jones said. “Michael Wurzer (FBS) planted the seed for an MLS constitution. Nicole Jensen (realMLS) crystallized why it matters when she said, ‘We have spent years explaining the value of the MLS. I think the more important conversation now is about its significance.’ And Andrew Coca’s (sourceRE) thinking about innovation, stewardship and data helped shape how these declarations could become a practical framework for data governance.”

Jones added, “The MLS is not simply a database, a set of rules or a technology platform. It is the cooperative infrastructure that allows competitors to work together while preserving a marketplace built on trusted information, transparency and an equal opportunity to compete.”

The Declaration focuses on stewardship of the marketplace, information, standards, trust, the opportunity to compete, data cooperation, the boundary between the cooperative marketplace and public marketing, innovation and sustainable operations, and local market knowledge.

Among its core principles, the Declaration states that the MLS “does not own the marketplace. It stewards it,” and argues that policies and business practices should ultimately be judged by whether they strengthen the marketplace the MLS is responsible for protecting.

It also draws a deliberate distinction between the cooperative marketplace and public marketing. The Declaration says that the MLS is responsible for the infrastructure through which brokers cooperate on behalf of buyers and sellers, while public marketing decisions belong to brokers serving their clients.

Another principle addresses competition, describing the MLS as a framework in which brokers compete through a shared infrastructure with access to the same information and consistent rules. Its conclusion: “The MLS does not level outcomes. It levels the field.”

Industry invited to sign and support

Hive MLS has published the complete [Declaration online](#) and is inviting members of the real estate industry to read it and show their support.

Individuals who support the principles can use the “Sign and Support” feature on the Declaration website. After submitting the form, supporters receive their own PDF copy of the complete Declaration. The website also features “The Keeper of Mendota Meadows: The road nobody planned,” a companion story authored by Jones that uses an allegory to explore why cooperation, competition and stewardship remain central to the MLS model.

“The Declaration is intended to start a much larger conversation,” Jones said. “The marketplace will continue to change. Technology will change. Business models will change. MLS organizations themselves may change. That makes it even more important to identify the responsibilities that should endure.”

The timing comes one week before the Council of Multiple Listing Services gathers Sept. 29-Oct. 1 in Fort Lauderdale for CMLS Open House 2026, where the future of the MLS, data governance, artificial intelligence, consolidation and other forces reshaping the industry are expected to be prominent topics.

The Declaration expressly states that it is *not* a federation proposal, consolidation effort, strategy for a single MLS, anti-NAR initiative, technology platform or prescription for how any MLS should operate. Instead, it is offered as “a common foundation any MLS can stand on.”

Read the Declaration and sign to support at bit.ly/mls-declaration.

About Hive MLS

Hive MLS is a broker-centric MLS and one of the nation’s fastest-growing, representing over 19,450 brokers and appraisers throughout the Southeast, including more than 450 cities and towns, with operations in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee and Alabama. It empowers Realtor Associations and MLSs of all sizes through community, collaboration and connectivity, reliable data, responsive service and a best-in-class toolset that includes innovative training. Learn more at HiveMLS.com.

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