

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

Good morning. My name is Hank Dunn. I am the Executive Director of the Transformation Project and the Transformation House, a MARR-certified Recovery Residence in Westbrook. I must tell you that this bill doesn't affect the Transformation House. We have sprinklers. So why am I here?

Because: LD 109 is an incredibly bad idea!

I have a unique perspective, as a retired Licensed Mechanical Engineer responsible for hundreds of thousands of square feet of sprinklered building construction, and as a Recovery Residence operator. As engineers develop building designs, public safety is a top concern. Designs for top concerns must be appropriate for the challenges faced.

The question is: **"Whether imposing a sprinkler requirement on Recovery Residences is appropriate for the challenge faced?"**

A couple facts:

- There were two fires in Maine recovery residences over the last two years and no fatalities.
- Roughly 1300 Mainers died from overdose in the last two years.

These two facts beg the follow up question: **"Where should scarce resources be invested?"**

There is a grim saying that goes, "Smoke Detectors save lives and Sprinklers save buildings." This points to the role of smoke versus fire in fatalities. The reality is that the **MARR standards already address the big killer**, which is smoke. These Fire Safety standards include Smoke Detection, Fire Extinguishers, Egress plans, No Smoking indoors, etc.

Are sprinklers a waste of time? No. Especially in Healthcare, Hi-Rise buildings, and in a variety of applications, they are critical. If there was plenty of money available, all buildings should be required to have sprinkler systems, including your own home.

This leads to more questions:

- Would the sprinklers in every recovery residence eventually save a life? Yes. **But at what cost?**
- If only one house closes and a new house never opens because of the financial burden, how many lives will we lose?
- How much more money will we spend incarcerating people at \$50,000/year (per person) when people relapse because they weren't in a place that supports recovery, and wind up breaking the law?

In closing, I would advocate for three things:

- **A vote on LD109 of "Ought not to pass."**
- **If you still feel you must vote for LD 109, the state must subsidize the cost (\$15M- \$30M)**
- **Better yet, commit to creating funding for developing Recovery Residences**

Hank Dunn (PE Retired)
Transformation Project
907 Main Street, Westbrook Maine 04092
207-854-2226 hank@tppmaine.org