



February 22, 2024

Good afternoon, esteemed members of the Appropriations and Taxation Committees,

My name is Kari Taylor, and I am a person in recovery from SUD and the Director of the newly opened HILLS Recovery Center in Western Maine. Today, I share the perspective of someone who utilized a recovery center and now helps run one in our rural community. I urge you to prioritize funding for LD 1714.

In 2017, it was suggested I come to Maine to enter treatment and sober living, though I had never stepped foot in Maine. They told me Portland had a robust recovery community and that I would set myself up for success by trying something new. At that point in my life, I had little to no hope, but I decided to listen to their suggestion, pack my bag, and move to Maine.

One of the first places I visited was the Portland Recovery Community Center. Never having been in a recovery center, I was absolutely floored that there was a place for people like me to unite to support one another. A place where I felt welcomed and part of a community. I hadn't been part of ANY community for almost 20 years. The mere existence of a "recovery center" made me feel valued and like I mattered. When I was in the throes of addiction, I felt alone and worthless.

I got better, fell in love with Maine, and moved to a rural community that has very little support services and no recovery center. Over time, I got involved with a community coalition, people volunteering and coming together to address the epidemic of addiction and the lack of resources. Together, we secured grant funding to open The HILLS Recovery Center in April 2023.

In rural communities, the challenges individuals face in accessing adequate support for substance use disorder are compounded. Limited resources, geographic isolation, and stigma can create formidable barriers to recovery. The HILLS Recovery Center bridges these gaps, offering a beacon of hope and a network of support where needed most.

The primary issue now is continued funding. Per our current grants, The HILLS Recovery Center can only stay open until August 2025 and will run out of a significant portion of our small annual budget in December this year. As you can imagine, we are constantly seeking out additional funding. I spend countless hours researching, grant writing, and fretting about how we will keep this lifeline going. After so much progress, to lose this center would be a significant loss for our community.

Funding LD 1714 is an investment in the well-being and vitality of our communities. You have the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of individuals and families grappling with addiction in our rural communities. You can be champions of recovery by funding LD 1714.

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Kari Taylor  
Executive Director, WMARI