

My name is Joshua Leonard. I am currently serving on the Board of Directors of the Maine Association of Recovery Residences as well as the Program Director and operator of Portland Sober Living. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and I am here to stand in opposition to this bill.

I have been a part of Portland Sober Living for over 5 years. Through this time, the people in recovery who have been a part of our program, current and past, are people I consider part of my family. With how much these people mean to myself and my partners, their safety is ALWAYS our primary concern. Safety is the foundation to our entire program. This is one of the reasons our program has chosen to join membership with the Maine Association of Recovery Residences. To put it simply, there is no need to risk putting recovery residences financial viability at risk with a \$20-\$40,000 sprinkler system to have adequate fire measures. You may be surprised to know we already have those measures.

MARR bases its safety protocol on NARR 3.0, a nationally accepted set of standards. Included in their fire safety protocol are standards including hanging evacuation plans, having fire extinguishers which have to be inspected annually, CO and smoke detectors and mandatory fire drills. We require electrical cover plates on all plugs and switches, we have window size requirements for adequate fire escape, limitations on outlet splitters, and evacuation ladders on upper floors that need to be at the ready, inspected and the windows clear from obstruction for emergency usage. Portland Sober living takes additional measures like cleaning ceiling fans quarterly, gas detectors and more

Considering all the VAST measures we take for fire safety, I'm hard pressed to believe that this bill that would force nearly 35-40 residences to go under, is a bill that can be justified. It stands to put 10 human beings in my house, and potentially over 400 people in recovery across the state, in the streets. We and many other programs simply can't afford to install a system like this. Even if we had all the money to do this work, our landlord would not permit us to carry out the work. Never mind the additional cost for service, maintenance, testing and upkeep on these systems even if our landlord would let us. Closing is our only option if this bill passes.

My family at Portland Sober Living and I, as well as countless people in the recovery community, urge you to vote no. Thank you for your time and consideration.