

Hello, my name is James Rickrode. I am a 20 year resident of Bangor and an alcoholic and addict in long term recovery. I have been the General Manager of Fresh Start Sober Living since we opened our first house in October 2018.

Fresh Start provides safe and affordable housing for people in recovery from drugs and alcohol. We currently have 12 homes totaling 89 beds and we are full with a waiting list. All Fresh Start homes are certified by Maine Association of Recovery Residences. Fresh Start staff works hard daily to maintain compliance with MARRs safety standards. In the past four years we have helped several hundred people have safe affordable housing and remain abstinent from drug and alcohol use.

My involvement with Fresh Start has allowed me to be free from active addiction for over five years. Fresh Start has also afforded me the opportunity to become a productive member of our community, and given me the chance to help many addicts and alcoholics achieve and maintain sobriety.

I am opposed to LD 109 because it would require us to install sprinklers in all our locations. This requirement would be an insurmountable financial burden, and would likely result in the closure of some or all of our homes. Closure of our homes would be a huge setback to all our current members and keep us from helping the dozens of future applicants each year.

I cannot tell you how much Fresh Start has done for our community in the three minutes you have given me but hope you all listen closely to the other members and staff that have testified today. I appreciate your time today and thank you for allowing us to weigh in on this important topic.

Sincerely,

James Rickrode