



130th Maine Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
Testimony of Erik C. Jorgensen, MaineHousing, Neither For Nor Against

LD 964: An Act to Expand Access to Certified Substance Use Disorder Recovery Residences

6 April, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Erik Jorgensen, Director of Government Relations at the Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing).

MaineHousing has been helping Maine people own, rent, repair, and heat their homes since 1969. MaineHousing is an independent state authority created to address the problems of unsafe, unsuitable, overcrowded, and unaffordable housing. We are authorized to issue bonds to finance single family mortgages for first time homebuyers and for affordable multi-family housing.

I am testifying today neither for nor against LD 954. MaineHousing has, for the past year, been working with DHHS to run a pilot program to provide operating support for existing and proposed recovery residences in Maine. A prerequisite for this funding is for the recovery residence to be certified by the Maine Association of Recovery Residences. We believe that such certifications assure that these organizations meet quality standards and we certainly support that intent of this bill.

We have spoken to the bill's sponsor, Rep. Fecteau, and would recommend a technical amendment to LD 954 regarding the use of federal rental subsidies. We do not think we could withhold a federal rental subsidy if the tenant and the landlord agreed to comply with all of the appropriate requirements.

To address that issue, we suggest the underscored language below be added to Sec. 1:

§20057. Certified recovery residences

Recovery residences must be certified pursuant to the requirements established in section 20005, subsection 22, to receive:

1. **Contracts.** Any department contract for a recovery residence or services related to the recovery residence; or

2. **Housing assistance.** To the extent not in conflict with federal law,~~A~~ any housing assistance or voucher provided by the department, the Maine State Housing Authority or a municipality provided to or for the person recovering from substance use disorder.

Thank you.