

PSR Maine

Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine Chapter

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Testimony in Support of LD 1730

“An Act to Make Plug-In Solar Accessible for All Mainers to Address the Energy Affordability Crisis”

By Sydney R. Sewall, MD
Hallowell, ME

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair
Representative Melanie Sachs, Chair

January 6, 2026

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology:

My name is Sydney Sewall. I am President of the Board of Directors of *Physicians for Social Responsibility, Maine (PSR Maine)*, an organization of physicians, nurses, and health professionals committed to protecting human health by preventing environmental harm. I am writing in strong support of LD 1730.

From a health perspective, LD 1730 addresses three urgent and interconnected challenges facing Maine families: **energy affordability, climate-driven health harms, and resilience during power outages.**

As clinicians, we see the health impacts of energy insecurity every day. Rising electricity costs force families to choose between heat, food, and medical care. Seniors, children, and people with chronic illnesses are especially vulnerable. Cold homes worsen respiratory and cardiovascular disease; extreme heat increases the risk of dehydration and heat stroke.

LD 1730 allows households to use small, low-cost plug-in solar systems to offset electricity use without navigating rules designed for large rooftop arrays. These systems are **affordable, safe, and accessible** to renters as well as residents of homes where the architecture makes rooftop units impractical.

Emissions from fossil fuels contribute to asthma, heart disease, stroke, premature birth, and early death. Even modest reductions provide measurable health benefits. By improving air quality, the public health effects of reducing fossil fuel use will save our state health dollars.

Plug-in solar also improves resilience. When paired with small batteries, these systems can provide essential backup power during outages—critical for people who rely on electricity for medications or medical devices.

LD 1730 establishes appropriate safety standards for installation and use without fiscal impact to the state. It expands access to clean energy while protecting grid reliability.

For these reasons, PSR Maine urges the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1730.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydney R. Sewall, MD
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President, Board of Directors
PSR Maine