

PSR Maine

Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine Chapter

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February 5, 2026

Testimony in favor of LD 307 from Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH of Hallowell --

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

My name is Sydney Sewall, and I am representing the Maine Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility in support of this bill. **PSR Maine** consists of 1000 health care providers from all parts of the state who share concerns about threats to public health that are beyond typical “diseases” – including climate change, environmental degradation, and nuclear conflagration.

We are not Luddites. We recognize that AI may provide a boost to productivity and social wellbeing over time -- if it is applied with those goals in mind. Many clinicians are already using AI in their clinical practices. We are concerned, however, that the technology that supports AI – in its current configuration – has consequences that need to be balanced against the potential benefits.

Until our electrical grid is fueled by renewables, the huge **power demands** created by data centers will inevitably lead to increased release of carbon into the atmosphere, exacerbating **climate change** (as well as raising electricity costs). Their need for cooling systems will **strain water resources** around any inland site or warm the coastal waters if sited near the ocean. Any **chemical additives** used in the cooling fluids need to be identified and checked for toxicity. The many fans and pumps required for cooling data centers are mechanical and loud – creating substantial **noise pollution** -- so any site near a residential area would be problematic for the surrounding population.

PSR Maine recently submitted testimony to the Lewiston City Council opposing a proposed AI data center at the Bates Mill in the downtown area. That proposal highlighted a growing statewide challenge: municipalities are being asked to evaluate highly complex, resource-intensive projects without meaningful regulatory support. LD 307 addresses this gap by creating a state agency with both the technical expertise and capacity to perform an appropriate analysis.

I hope the committee will deliver an “ought to pass” motion on this bill.

Sincerely,



Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH
Hallowell
Board President, PSR Maine