

*Committee will take lead on energy, health care, the environment and telecommunications in 111th Congress*

WASHINGTON, DC - Rep. Peter Welch was named to the influential House Committee on Energy and Commerce Monday night, Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced.

Energy and Commerce has broad jurisdiction, including oversight of five Cabinet-level departments and seven independent agencies, as well as legislative authority over energy policy, health care, telecommunications, trade, and the environment. The committee's areas of jurisdiction align not only with Welch's top priorities but with a broad swath of President-elect Obama's legislative agenda.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for Vermonters to have a seat at the table as Congress tackles our nation's most pressing priorities," Welch said. "We must reform our health care system, craft a 21st century energy policy and create new, green jobs. On the Energy and Commerce Committee we will be able to directly address these and other issues Vermonters care about most and get this country back on track."

The news came on the eve of the 111th Congress, as Welch prepared to be sworn in to a second term in office. Welch will be sworn in today at noon.

On the committee, Welch will join incoming Chairman Henry Waxman, who previously served as chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Waxman said, "I am delighted that Peter Welch is joining the Energy and Commerce Committee. Over the last two years, I have worked with him closely on the Oversight Committee and have been extremely impressed by his leadership. His exceptional ability and experience will make an important difference as we moved forward in the new Congress."