

*Provision calls for 2.5 percent annual increase in energy efficiency*

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce, which is nearing completion of a historic climate change bill, today approved an amendment authored by Rep. Peter Welch setting the nation's first energy efficiency improvement target.

Welch's amendment to the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, H.R. 2454, sets a national target of improving energy efficiency 2.5 percent-per-year from 2012 through 2030. The provision calls on the Secretary of Energy and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to develop a strategic plan to achieve the national goal.

"Vermont has led the way in demonstrating the effectiveness of investing in energy efficiency. By setting these ambitious goals, we will encourage the rest of the country to follow Vermont's lead, bringing us one step closer to an energy policy that creates jobs, reduces energy costs and fights global warming," Welch said.

The Welch amendment was cosponsored by Reps. Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) and Rep. Christopher Murphy (D-Conn.).

H.R. 2454, the first cap and trade bill to garner support in the U.S. Congress, seeks to reduce global warming emissions 83 percent by 2050 and create a renewable energy standard of 20 percent by 2020.

The bill also includes the Retrofit for Energy and Environmental Performance program, Welch-authored legislation designed to invest in retrofitting existing homes and buildings to make them more energy efficient.