Rep. Peter Welch supported and the House passed legislation late Wednesday to address a projected shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund by restoring $7 billion in federal transportation funding to the states.

H.R. 3357 prevents an 85 percent reduction in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding, which would have reduced Vermont's share from $134 million to $20 million in 2010.

The cut would have forced Vermont Agency of Transportation to shut down all new FHWA construction, resulting in the loss of 998 jobs, according to the American Road and Transportation Builders Association.

"A recession is no time to cut federal highway funding and layoff hundreds of workers," Welch said. "This bill ensures that Vermont can continue to rebuild its roads and bridges and maintain good-paying jobs."