

Washington, DC - Rep. Peter Welch released the following statement marking today's celebration of Earth Day:

"For the last 38 years, Earth Day has provided a time to focus on how we can be better stewards of our environment. Looking back, we can be proud that through leadership and innovation we successfully tackled some of our most vexing environmental challenges- from vast ozone depletion to toxic rivers. Yet the challenges we face today are some of the greatest we have ever faced.

"On this Earth Day, a dead-end, misguided energy policy has left Vermonters facing record fuel prices and our environment suffering the consequences. By aggressively charting a new energy future focused on renewable energy and efficiency, we can bring energy prices under control, create millions of new green-collar jobs, protect our environment, and effectively combat the challenge of global warming. With new leadership in Congress, we have made progress. But I will continue to fight until we have successfully turned our energy policies around, delivering the changes both the environment and consumers need."

**Background on recent energy policy progress in Congress:**

Last December, the historic and bipartisan Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 was signed into law, increasing vehicle fuel efficiency standards for the first time since 1975. Automobile mileage standards will be increased to 35 mpg by 2020 and help save American families an average \$700 to \$1,000 per year at the gas pump. The new law will help save 5.3 billion metric tons in energy-related CO2 emissions from 2008-2030 and cut the growth in energy-related emissions of CO2 by 10 percent.

In addition, the House-passed Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008 would end unnecessary subsidies to Big Oil companies and invest in clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency. The bill extends and expands tax incentives for renewable electricity, energy and fuel, as well as for plug-in and hybrid cars, and energy efficient homes, buildings, and appliances. The solar investment tax credit in this legislation alone will reduce carbon emissions by 240 million tons, or the equivalent of taking 52 million passenger cars off the road for a year.