

Washington, DC - Rep. Peter Welch has rallied 49 members of Congress to oppose a proposal being considered by the House Energy and Commerce Committee that would prohibit states like Vermont from adopting auto emission standards that are tougher than those imposed by the federal government.

Welch's goal is to assure federal preemption on auto emissions is not included in energy legislation expected to be considered by the U.S. House in July.

In a letter written by Welch to Committee on Energy and Commerce Chairman John D. Dingell and Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee Chairman Rick Boucher, the lawmakers argue that, "Under our federal system, states have been laboratories for constructive change but they need Washington to be a partner, not an impediment, to their initiatives. To the contrary, this draft legislation would deprive our states of their authority to take the steps they deem appropriate to protect the health and safety of their citizens."

"This proposal would gut the efforts of Vermont and many other states to clean our air and combat global warming. Global warming is an urgent problem and if the federal government won't act, the states must be permitted to continue to lead the way," said Welch.

Welch argues that, "rather than handcuffing the states, it is long past time for the federal government to step up and begin to lead the way."

Eleven states, including Vermont, have adopted California's Low Emission Vehicle Standards, including mandated reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which limit the amount of carbon dioxide and other gasses that can be emitted from vehicle tailpipes.

Currently, California is applying for a waiver from the Environmental Protection Agency to adopt stricter emissions standards as permitted under the Clean Air Act. If California adopts improved standards, other states are permitted to follow California's lead. The proposal in the Energy and Commerce Committee would preempt state laws for regulating emissions.

The letter is both pasted below and attached:

June 15, 2007

The Honorable John D. Dingell
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Boucher
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell and Chairman Boucher,

We commend your leadership in the Energy and Commerce Committee on addressing the challenge of global warming and reducing our dependence on foreign oil. However, we are concerned with provisions in the Discussion Draft on Alternative Fuels, Infrastructure, and Vehicles which would strip our states of their authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles.

Many states have moved ahead to address global warming with pro-growth, pro-high tech initiatives. Under our federal system, states have been laboratories for constructive change but they need Washington to be a partner, not an impediment, to their initiatives.

To the contrary, this draft legislation would deprive our states of their authority to take the steps they deem appropriate to protect the health and safety of their citizens. We aspire to a better outcome for our constituents and we look forward to working with you to resolve this issue.

Sincerely,

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Other Members who have signed on:

Keith Ellison
Albio Sires
Peter DeFazio
Michael Michaud
Adam Schiff
Patrick Kennedy
James Langevin
Jason Altmire
Steve Rothman
Jim McGovern
Ellen Tauscher
Ed Perlmutter
Heath Shuler
Paul Hodes
Steve Lynch
John Hall
Michael Arcuri
Earl Blumenauer
Joe Courtney

Chris Shays
Jerrold Nadler
Gwen Moore
Dennis Cardoza
Jim McDermott
Barney Frank
Sam Farr
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Chris Murphy
Michael Honda
George Miller
Tom Lantos
Carol Shea-Porter
Howard Berman
Brad Sherman
Louise Slaughter
Linda Sanchez
Raul Grijalva
John Sarbanes
Adam Smith
Bob Filner
Phil Hare
Mark Udall
Yvette Clarke
Joe Sestak
Brad Miller
Lynn Woolsey
Barbara Lee
Jim Moran
Pete Stark