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Washington, DC - Rep. Peter Welch joined House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and congressional leaders today in announcing the U.S. Capitol will become carbon neutral.

"Peter Welch has been a leader on this issue," Pelosi said.

At the press conference, House and Senate leaders embraced the "Greening the Capitol" initiative, announcing goals to operate the House in a carbon-neutral manner by the end of the 110th Congress and reduce the carbon footprint of the House by reducing energy consumption by 50% in 10 years.

Joining Pelosi were Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Senate Assistant Leader Dick Durbin, House Administration Committee Chairman Robert Brady, House Science and Technology Committee Chairman Bart Gordon, House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming Chairman Edward Markey, House Appropriations Legislation Branch Subcommittee Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, and Welch.

In February, Welch launched an initiative to make his congressional offices in Vermont and Washington carbon neutral by working to reduce energy use and offsetting his office's carbon emissions. By providing financial support for Vermont renewable energy projects, Welch offset the greenhouse gas emissions related to his office activities so they will not contribute to global warming.

Welch said today, "The time for addressing global warming is now. Speaker Pelosi and the congressional leadership have demonstrated the strong commitment to addressing global warming that we so desperately need from our nation's leaders. While the challenges of global warming must be addressed through comprehensive legislation, we also have the opportunity to take practical, immediate actions as a first step and to serve as a vital example."

In April, when first announcing the initiative, Pelosi said, "The environmental challenges we face are as local as our neighborhoods and as global as our planet. The House must lead by example and Congressman Welch exemplifies this key model. He has brought Vermont's values to Washington and his leadership on global warming is a valuable asset to the U.S. Congress and to our country."

In addition to the use of efficiency, the House will become carbon neutral by purchasing electricity generated from renewable sources, switching from using coal, oil, and natural gas to only natural gas, and purchasing carbon offsets for the remaining fossil fuels.

For more information, see Speaker Pelosi's release available here: <http://www.speaker.gov/newsroom/pressreleases?id=0222>