

Washington, DC -- Washington, D.C. - Rep. Peter Welch joined Senators Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders today for a Senate Agriculture Committee field hearing on the 2007 Farm Bill in Montpelier.

The meeting was convened by Leahy, acting chairman of the committee.

"We are all here today because we are committed to a strong, diverse, and prosperous agricultural future in Vermont... We have to fight for the local economies that are so vital to our community and to our way of life," said Welch.

Welch continued, "Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders and I are committed to bringing home the strongest possible Farm Bill for Vermont... It gives me great pride to represent a state with such a deep commitment to the land and our local economies."

Welch's full statement is below:

**Statement of Congressman Peter Welch
"2007 Farm Bill Opportunities for Vermont and the Northeast"
Vermont Farm Bill Field Hearing
March 12, 2007**

Mr. Chairman, I first want to thank you for holding this hearing today. The Vermont farm community must be heard as Congress prepares to write the 2007 Farm Bill. Thank you and Senator Sanders for your unwavering commitment to Vermont agriculture. We are all here today because we are committed to a strong, diverse, and prosperous agricultural future in Vermont.

I have never been more impressed with our extended farm community as I have been in the last two months as a new member of Congress. So many Vermont farmers, suppliers, innovators, and members of our community have taken the time to talk with me, meet with my staff, invite

me to your farms, and even come to Washington to talk about the challenges we face and hope for the future.

We are here today to give the Vermont agricultural community the opportunity to be on the record, express their needs, and work towards better agriculture policy for all Vermonters. I am committed to working as a strong and united delegation with our Senators, Governor, and legislature for a pro-Vermont Farm Bill.

I will fight hard for our dairy, for our organics, for our conservation programs, for our forestry, for our innovative energy programs, and for our nutrition programs. I am building coalitions with other like-minded Members from the Northeast and will seek to involve my colleagues in regional solutions to our common goals.

I understand that a strong local agricultural economy is critical to Vermont and critical to our nation. It produces jobs and value-added products. Our farmers are stewards of the land and keep our land open. Local production yields healthy nutritional products and keeps our kids connected to the state's traditions.

We have to fight for the local economies that are so vital to our community and to our way of life.

Our dairy farmers need a stable price and a fair price for milk. Our organic farms must be protected from weakened standards, lobbied by corporate giants. We should pursue energy-savings initiatives and nutrition programs that preserve the strength of our farm communities.

There will be obstacles along the way, but a one size fits all dairy policy for our country is as good as no policy at all.

I tell you what I hope many of you already know: Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders and I are committed to bringing home the strongest possible Farm Bill for Vermont. We hope for your help and we appreciate your advocacy.

Welch joins delegation in fight for pro-Vermont Farm Bill

Sunday, 11 March 2007 19:00

It gives me great pride to represent a state with such a deep commitment to the land and our local economies. It gives me pride to hear from you today.

This is important for you, our Vermont farmers, but make no mistake it is important for every Vermonter.