

Becomes first office to enact Architect of the Capitol energy efficiency improvements



At a press conference at his Washington office, Rep. Peter Welch unveiled new lighting and water fixtures designed to cut energy use and save money.

Welch's office is the first to undergo energy efficiency improvements designed by the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) to reduce energy use by 23 percent and water use by 32 percent throughout U.S. House office buildings. The improvements will save taxpayers \$3.3 million a year.

Welch, a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, became the first member of Congress to go carbon neutral in all office activities when he took office in 2007. He is the author of the Retrofit for Energy and Environmental Performance legislation, which passed the House last year, and is a leading proponent of the energy efficiency program, Home Star – or Cash for Caulkers.

"Investing in energy efficiency creates jobs, saves money and helps combat climate change," Welch said. "Congress must lead by example and these efficiency investments do just that. I'm hopeful this work will help demonstrate to consumers throughout the country that efficiency works."

The 30-month AOC project will replace 33,000 light fixtures; upgrade heating, ventilation and air conditioning controls and equipment; install low-flow restroom fixtures; and replace steam traps in all House office buildings. The work will achieve carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to removing 1,700 cars from the road or planting 2,600 acres of trees.

Under the terms of a public-private Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC), upfront costs of the improvements will be paid for by NORESCO, which will recoup its investment through guaranteed minimum savings. This arrangement will ensure that no taxpayer dollars are used to perform the upgrades.

"As part of our overall mission to maintain and preserve the Capitol complex, the Architect of the Capitol has embraced the principles of sustainable design in our planning, building, operations and maintenance of the facilities and grounds here at the Capitol," noted Stephen T. Ayers, Acting Architect of the Capitol. "We appreciate Congressman Welch's leadership and support of our efforts and his willingness to be our first Energy Savings Performance Contract 'test office' in the Longworth Building."

This work builds on efforts by the Chief Administrative Officer's Green the Capitol program, which seeks to encourage sustainable business practices, energy efficient technologies and design and behavioral changes.

"We're thrilled to have Congressman Welch's support in bringing our historic buildings into a new era of energy efficiency," Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard said. "These improvements underscore the Green the Capitol program's ongoing commitment to a greener, more sustainable House that is a good steward of both resources and taxpayer dollars."

In addition to Ayers and Green the Capitol executive director Bob Lane, Welch was joined at the press conference by Kateri Callahan, president of the Alliance to Save Energy.

"Congressman Welch is showing his colleagues in the House and citizens across that energy efficiency is for everyone. Switching out lights and water fixtures are simple steps every American can and should do," Callahan said. "The Environmental Protection Agency says that if every home in this country switched one incandescent light bulb to a compact fluorescent, it would save \$600 million and enough electricity to light seven million homes across the U.S. It

just makes sense."