

Rep. Peter Welch on Monday announced a \$450,000 federal grant for Vermont Law School to conduct Smart Grid research and analysis aimed at updating the U.S. power grid.

The grant, which was secured by Welch, will help VLS' Institute for Energy and the Environment become a national leader in Smart Grid implementation standards. It will further the Institute's efforts to address the reliability, cost and environmental impact of the nation's energy policy.

"Vermont Law School has long led the nation in addressing challenging questions related to energy and the environment," Welch said. "This grant will bolster VLS' leadership in the field and empower students to tackle the next generation of energy challenges. Most importantly, it will lay the regulatory and legal groundwork for Vermont's coming deployment of Smart Grid technology."

The VLS grant follows Vermont's successful effort last fall to secure \$69 million in federal stimulus funds for its "eEnergy Vermont" plan, which will help the state create jobs, reduce costs and cut fossil fuel emissions by deploying the first statewide Smart Grid system. Part of a \$3.4 billion Smart Grid investment created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Vermont's funding was secured through collaboration between utility companies, state government and the congressional delegation.

"Updating the U.S. power grid to address energy and economic inefficiencies is vital for our nation," said Professor Michael Dworkin, the Institute's director. "This project will provide the much needed legal and policy foundation to protect customer information, while increasing the efficiency of managing the transmission system, which will greatly reduce financial costs, environmental emissions and reliability concerns."

Welch was joined at the announcement by VLS Dean Jeff Shields, Environmental Law Center Director Marc Mihally and VELCO Vice President for External Affairs Kerrick Johnson.