

[Alexei Rubenstein, WCAX News](#)

Congressman Peter Welch says a weatherization bill he plans to introduce this week will benefit businesses and the economy.

Bob Nelson's Ace Hardware building in Barre is 115 years old. It has eight apartments and hasn't seen major renovations in 20 years.

Under Welch's proposed Building Star program, the Nelson building and other businesses like it would be eligible for low-interest loans and rebates if they make improvements like installing high-efficiency furnaces, and insulation.

"This is what folks that work and live and own property in the downtown are looking for," Nelson said. "It's a way to save money, be more energy efficient, reduce the carbon footprint. It is as the Congressman said-- a win-win-win for everybody involved."

"There's a lot of work to be done retrofitting homes and businesses-- commercial buildings and in the retrofitting of those buildings it requires that we use local labor, it requires that we use products that are made in America," said Welch, D-Vermont.

The Building Star bill is modeled after Welch's other weatherization initiative-- Home Star-- which passed the house this spring. Although the \$6 billion proposal has no Republican co-sponsors, Welch says he has sought support from Republicans and that it has a good chance of passing later next year if approved on its own, and not bundled with more controversial energy legislation.