

Challenging House Republican leaders to reverse course and once again set an example for the country, Rep. Peter Welch on Friday offered an amendment to a legislative appropriations bill that would ban the use of Styrofoam in House cafeterias. The House voted 179 to 234 against Welch's amendment.

When the House leadership changed hands in January, compostable and recyclable food containers and utensils were removed from all the House cafeterias and replaced with Styrofoam. The environmentally-friendly utensils were part of former House Speaker Pelosi's "Greening the Capitol" initiative to make the U.S. House of Representatives a national leader in resource stewardship and sustainable business practices.

"Congress should be leading the way in making environmentally sound business decisions," Welch said. "The decision to replace environmentally-friendly utensils with Styrofoam is a major step backwards. Using Styrofoam is outdated, environmentally harmful and hazardous to people's health. McDonald's saw the light 20 years ago and stopped using Styrofoam."

The harmful effects of Styrofoam are well documented: cancer-causing chemicals are used during its manufacture, it is difficult to recycle and most Styrofoam containers end up in landfills or incinerators where toxic byproducts are released. A 1986 EPA report on solid waste identified the Styrofoam manufacturing process as the 5th largest creator of hazardous waste. Additionally, toxic chemicals can leak from Styrofoam containers into the food and beverages they hold.

Welch moves to ban the use of Styrofoam in House cafeterias

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In March, Welch joined 105 Democrats in sending a letter to Speaker John Boehner asking him to remove Styrofoam from the House cafeterias. To see the letter, [CLICK HERE](#) .

Welch spoke on the House floor Friday in support of his amendment. To see the video, [CLICK HERE](#) .