WASHINGTON, DC - Rep. Peter Welch responded Tuesday night to President Obama's address to a Joint Session of Congress with the following:

"Tonight President Obama demonstrated once more that he understands the gravity of the economic crisis we face and the hardship it has created for our struggling middle class. He made clear what all Vermonters know - that our first priority must be to create jobs and restore lost confidence in our economy.

"At the same time, the President showed that he is committed to turning crisis into opportunity - and while this economic crisis is undoubtedly enormous, opportunities abound to tackle our nation's greatest challenges. Together, we can build a green energy economy, we can reform our health care system and we can restore fiscal sanity to our federal budget.

"The road ahead is long, but step by step we can succeed in strengthening our economy and rebuilding our middle class."