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Congressman Peter Welch
United States House of Representatives

Republican House passes Welch bipartisan energy efficiency legislation

Energy Efficiency Improvement Act overwhelming approved

By a vote of 375-36, the U.S. House of Representatives this afternoon approved energy efficiency legislation authored by Representative Peter Welch. The Energy Efficiency Improvement Act, H.R. 2126, is the first significant bipartisan energy initiative approved by the House in the 113th Congress.

Rep. David McKinley (R-WV) is the lead Republican cosponsor of Welch's bill and a member, with Welch, of the powerful House Committee on Energy and Commerce. The bill is the product of months of negotiations between Welch, McKinley, Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Fred Upton and Ranking Democrat Henry Waxman.

"I have long believed that energy efficiency is an area of common ground in this divided Congress," Welch said [during floor debate yesterday on the bill](#). "Saving energy creates jobs, saves money and improves the environment. We have disagreements on the causes of climate change and the best fuel mix to meet America's energy demands, but we can all agree that using less is more. We can all agree that creating demand for American-made energy efficient products will create good jobs. And we can all agree that cutting the energy bills of homeowners, businesses and the federal government is a good thing."

The Energy Efficiency Improvement Act has four key components:

- Establishes energy efficiency best practices for commercial tenants renting space in commercial buildings and creates a new TENANT STAR certification program. TENANT STAR will be modeled after the existing ENERGY STAR program which certifies commercial buildings as highly energy efficient.
- Requires federal agencies to implement strategies to increase the efficiency of energy consuming data centers operated by the federal government.
- Removes a regulatory barrier to the manufacture of large scale water heaters, which act as residential energy storage devices and allow utilities to curb energy demand during peak hours.
- Establishes a benchmarking and disclosure process for energy consumed in federally leased buildings.

The bill has been endorsed by a diverse number of organizations including the Real Estate Roundtable, U.S. Green Building Council, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Alliance to Save Energy, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

[During yesterday's debate](#), Rep. Welch highlighted Efficiency Vermont's pioneering work as the first statewide energy efficiency utility which, from 2000-2011, saved enough electricity to power every Vermont home for two years.

The Senate is expected to soon consider similar legislation introduced by Sen. Shaheen (D-NH) and Sen. Portman (R-OH).

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