

Washington, DC - The U.S. House passed the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund to improve housing affordability in Vermont and across the country.

The National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2007, [H.R. 2895](#) , will provide a projected \$800 million to \$1 billion in funding for states and local communities to distribute grants to organizations, agencies, non-profits, or for-profits that demonstrate the capacity to build and rehabilitate affordable housing. It will provide funding to build or preserve an estimated 1.5 million new affordable units over the next 10 years.

"One of the biggest challenges facing too many working Vermonters is finding decent and affordable housing for their families. This legislation provides critical federal support to local communities to help meet this challenge head on and put affordable housing within the reach of millions of Americans," said Welch.

Welch worked with Financial Services Chairman Barney Frank to assure that small states receive a minimum level of funding under the distribution formula. At Welch's request, Frank added the guarantee that every state will receive at least .5 percent of the total funds available.

The National Housing Trust Fund is modeled after successful state programs like Vermont's Housing Trust Fund and was first championed in Congress by Senator Bernie Sanders while serving in the U.S. House.

In 1987, Welch was an original sponsor of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund Act, which has generated over 8,500 units of affordable housing statewide since its inception.

Gus Seelig, executive director of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, said "It is great to see Congress and Representative Welch making this significant commitment to improve access to affordable housing. This legislation will provide a significant boost to the good work already being done here in Vermont."

Welch believes Vermont must continue to aggressively address housing affordability, noting that 67 percent of Vermont's households have incomes below what is needed to afford the median price of a single family home. For renters, 60 percent of Vermonters have jobs that pay less than what is required to afford the average two bedroom apartment.

This legislation will comply with Pay-go rules adopted by the House and requires no new taxes. The fund is financed by new Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac contributions and additional revenue generated by proposed reform of the Federal Housing Administration.

The bill passed 264 to 148.