

Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) cited Home Star's "transformative potential" this morning in opening remarks at a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing on the proposed energy efficiency jobs program.

A leader in promoting energy efficiency, Welch is the author of the Retrofit for Energy and Environmental Performance program, upon which Home Star is based.

The following are Welch's remarks, as prepared for delivery:

"Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Markey and Ranking Member Upton. Thanks also to members of the Home Star coalition for their tireless work on this initiative. This is a coalition that ranges from global manufacturers to local contractors, from giant retailers to mom-and-pop lumber dealers, and from workers to environmental leaders.

"Since the introduction and passage of the Retrofit for Energy and Environmental Performance program – a national residential and commercial retrofit initiative passed by this committee and the House – this unique coalition has indentified, as we have, the true potential and low-hanging fruit of building energy efficiency.

"Home Star has tremendous, transformative potential. It's a program that will confront our short-term economic challenges while addressing our long-term energy and climate crises.

"Home Star is the rare initiative that promises to:

- Put contractors and builders to work from Vermont to Arizona
- Create manufacturing jobs from Ohio to Michigan
- And help small town hardware stores and large national chains alike draw customers in a difficult economic climate.

"It's the rare initiative that promises to draw bipartisan support – because it achieves a hat-trick of bipartisan goals:

- It will create more than 160,000 good-paying jobs
- It will empower 3 million American families to cut their energy bills, saving them \$10 billion over 10 years.
- And it will reduce our dependence upon foreign oil, making our nation more secure and our climate more stable.

"I come from a state that has proven that efficiency works.

- Over the course of seven years, Vermont reduced its energy use by seven percent by providing incentives to become more energy efficient.
- It cut energy costs for Vermont homeowners and businesses by \$31 million annually.
- And in the process it created thousands of quality jobs.

"Just this week, I had the opportunity to visit a home in Williston, Vermont, undergoing an efficiency retrofit.

"What I saw was just the sort of scene members of this committee will see in each of their districts with Home Star:

- A team of efficiency contractors hard at work,
- Locally purchased materials and American-made products awaiting installation,
- And a Vermont family that will see its energy use cut by 30 percent.

"This family was fortunate enough to live in a state that has recognized the power and potential of efficiency. But I believe families throughout the country should have the resources necessary to invest in their homes.

"If we move forward with Home Star, this scene will be replicated in millions of homes throughout our country and stand-up an industry to meet demand.

"I believe we can and must kick-start a residential and commercial retrofits revolution, starting first with Home Star.

"To my colleagues in the minority: we want to work with you. We want to make this happen – not for political or partisan benefit, but simply because there is so much to gain."