

McCollum commemorates Earth Day, applauds EPA ruling

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Washington, DC – US Rep. Betty McCollum (MN-04) is commemorating Earth Day by urging Americans to work together to protect and preserve the planet. She is also applauding the Obama Administration decision to clear the way for U.S. regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ruled on April 17th that carbon pollution is a danger to human health and welfare.

Over the past thirty years, America has made huge strides with the passage of the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the federal superfund laws. But the last eight years have put the nation at risk. The EPA's action is a stark reversal of failed Bush Administration policies that experts say have had a significant impact on the Earth.

“We face a new generation of environmental challenges, like greenhouse gases and global climate change, which have emerged as serious and urgent health, economic and political issues facing the world community. It is important to talk about the problem, but more importantly, the U.S. need to act in a responsible and purposeful manner to do something about it. I commend President Obama for working with Congress to start to decrease our nation's greenhouse gas emissions and establish the U.S. as a leader on addressing global climate change,” McCollum said.

McCollum strongly supports the Obama administration's goal to reduce greenhouse emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Over the last few months, responsible policies have been enacted to promote investments in clean energy, while preserving the environment and its natural treasures. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act invests almost \$40 billion for research and development, a new “Smart” electric grid to carry renewable energy across the country, and doubles the country's investment to generate more renewable energy. The budget resolution the House passed a few weeks ago increases funding for science, technology, and renewable resources to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil.

“We have both a moral responsibility and self-interest in protecting our environment. Working together we must invest and act to take on the polluters and protect our air, water and open spaces for generations to come,” McCollum added.

There have been great strides to ensure a healthier planet for future generations. In the last two years, Congress passed the first increase in vehicle mileage standards in three decades; increased efficiency standards for household appliances; and provided increased incentives for solar, wind and geothermal energy. It is expected that both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House will introduce climate change bills this year. Many states have already taken the lead in demonstrating a commitment to environmental sustainability. Minnesota has become a national leader by enacting a bold renewable energy standard. Capitalizing on the abundance of renewable energy sources, like wind, 25 percent of the state's energy use will come from renewable sources by the year 2025.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) serves on the House Appropriations & Budget Committees.