



Minnesota's 4th District E-Report!

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



JANUARY 30, 2004

Hot News!

McCollum Convenes Panel on the Impact of Hemispheric Trade Agreements in Minnesota

This week, Rep. Betty McCollum convened a field hearing in St. Paul to discuss the impact of hemispheric trade agreements on Minnesota workers and communities. Trade agreements currently being negotiated by the Bush Administration would have a major impact on Minnesota.

McCollum heard testimony from Mr. Larry Weiss of the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition; Mr. Steve Hunter, Secretary Treasurer of the Minnesota AFL-CIO; Mr. R. Dennis Olson, Senior Associate at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; Ms. Ginny Yingling of the Sierra Club; Mr. Doug Peterson, President of the Minnesota Farmers Union; and Mr. Mark Froemke of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union. Representatives from dozens of other organizations also participated in the discussion.

"Trade agreements have a major impact on families and communities in Minnesota," noted Rep. McCollum. "While trade pacts increasingly affect our everyday lives, particularly the ability to find a good-paying job, too often the public is excluded from the debate."

The hearing provided a forum for concerned citizens, including union leaders, farmers and environmentalists, to outline problems and propose solutions.

The testimony focused particularly on the proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement currently being negotiated by the Bush administration. The pact would threaten several U.S. industries, including the sugar beet industry in Minnesota, and would open up a number of public services to potential privatization.

"CAFTA does nothing to help our farmers and will further increase the race to the bottom for our farmers and laborers," said Doug Peterson of the Minnesota Farmers Union.



Rep. Betty McCollum visited the Ice Palace at the 2004 St. Paul Winter Carnival last week. The palace was built by hundreds of volunteers including organized labor. The Palace is made of 27,000 blocks of ice that create a walk-through castle consisting of five turrets. The structure reach heights of 75 feet and weighs 5,500 tons. "I want to send a special thank you to Dick Anfang and Harry Melander and all the St. Paul Building Trades volunteers for their tireless efforts to construct the magnificent Ice Palace," said McCollum. For more information about the Ice Palace and events during the 10-day Winter Carnival, please visit www.winter-carnival.com.

The Week Ahead

February 2 – Rep. Betty McCollum will discuss current affairs with the Boy Scout Troop 71 at the United Methodist Church in Woodbury.

February 4 to February 7 -- Rep. Betty McCollum will attend the 2004 Democratic Issues Conference.

Contact Congresswoman Betty McCollum . . . www.house.gov/mccollum/contact.html

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