WASHINGTON, DC –US Rep. Betty McCollum (MN-04) last week congratulated St. Paul Central High School's team who received national honors for their achievements during the U.S. Department of Energy's 2009 National Science Bowl, the nation's largest academic competition of its kind.

"Investing in America's future requires a significant investment in our students to ensure they are prepared with the academic training that will be necessary to tackle complex issues, like climate change and retrofitting our crumbling infrastructure," McCollum said. "I am very proud of St. Paul Central High School's science team for their commitment to excellence, which is demonstrated in their national achievements over the last two years."

McCollum met with the St. Paul students to congratulate them during the High School Science Bowl Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill. On May 2-4, St. Paul Central students Jennifer Wei, Jonathan Schellenberg, Martin Camacho, Yowon Yoon, Simon Gebrehiwet, along with their coach Randy Knoche, engaged in intense competition against students from 67 high schools across the country during this weekend's National Finals. To secure a place in the national contest, the St. Paul team had to defeat high schools from across the state in Minnesota Academy of Science's 15th Annual Minnesota State Regional Science Bowl for High School Students this past January. The team competed against 26 teams of science and math students in order to represent Minnesota for the 2nd consecutive time in the national competition.

"For America to compete globally, student must excel in the sciences to ensure our nation has the engineers, mathematicians and scientists to prosper in the 21st century," Congresswoman McCollum said.

Last Congress, McCollum was a staunch supporter of the *America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act*
- America COMPETES - which doubles basic research funding and creates a math and science teacher corp. The legislation, which is now law, seeks to reverses alarming trends in the sciences. Less than 15 percent of U.S. high school graduates have sufficient proficiency in math

and science to seek an engineering degree. The number of engineers, mathematicians and scientists graduating with bachelors degrees from higher institutions has declined by 18 percent over the last twenty years.

The Department of Energy's National Science Bowl was developed to encourage students to excel in science and math, and to pursue careers in those fields.

The contest attracts more than 17,000 students nationwide. At the high school level, it involves more than 12,000 students and at the middle school level, more than 5,000 competitors.

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