

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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Washington D.C. --- "No one can ever do enough when natural disasters take place, but we must be prepared and we must try," Congressman Nick J. Rahall (D-4th), said this morning in testimony before the House Public Works Subcommittee on Water Resources.

Rahall asserted, "Federal funds must be available at all times to finance the speedy implementation of a Federal disaster relief operation. The victims do not want excuses....we owe them answers and immediate results."

The Raleigh County Democrat made these remarks in support of HR 6197, legislation to provide additional appropriations for the Federal Disaster Assistance Program.

Rahall, returning to Washington D.C. after 15 days in the Fourth District of West Virginia of which he represents, observed, "Many of my friends and neighbors have had all they've worked for their entire lives, destroyed by the waters of the Tug Fork River." The Congressman pointed out however, "West Virginians are a proud people. They do not want hand-outs. They intend to rebuild their homes, their businesses, and their towns."

Rahall also had some criticism for the relief operation in his State, "The suffering experienced by the people....would have been much less I judge, if more personnel had been on hand to guide the victims through the maze of forms and applications they had to complete before obtaining the assistance they were entitled to." Rahall went on to say, "I also feel that the clean up operation would have taken place sooner if more workers were available. Now much of the mud has turned to rock and the effort is much more difficult."

Congressman Rahall related to the Committee what he saw while in the Fourth District, "It almost tore my heart out to tell some of my constituents, who had just lost their home, all of their belongings, their car and their livelihood, that help would arrive in two or three days." He then told the members, "I witnessed this type of situation all too often during those 15 days. And I hope none of my colleagues in the House of Representatives or the Senate ever have to face a similar occurrence."