

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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Washington D.C. --- U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall (D-4th), has called for a Congressional investigation into the effectiveness of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Federal Disaster Assistance Programs.

In letters to two subcommittee Chairman, Con. Thomas Ashley, (D-Ohio), Housing and Community Development Subcommittee and Con. Joseph Minish (D-N.J.), Oversight Subcommittee, Rahall outlined the major faults of the relief effort.

Rahall said, "Response was too slow; second, the scope of the damage was underestimated; third, there was inadequate professional staff; four, the location of the headquarters outside the flooded area had a very detrimental effect on the victims; five, the staff assigned to the field was inadequately trained to manage a relief program of the magnitude; and six, public officials and local citizens were not involved in a formally structured manner in the recovery operations."

Congressman Rahall stated that the need for an investigation exists because, "The central question is, whether and to what extent the federal government should assist victims of natural disasters such as the flooding in West Virginia, and if the assistance was the best that could be offered, changes are definitely necessary."

"If anything was worse than the damage and suffering caused by the floods, it was the frustration which was experienced as the flood victims tried to obtain federal assistance," Congressman Rahall said, "I just hope the flood victims in Johnstown have it a little better than the people in my district of West Virginia."

In conclusion, Rahall stated that he expects an answer on his request for an investigation sometime next week.