

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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Washington D.C. --- U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall (D-4th), today voiced his support for legislation that would transfer the administration of all coal mining health and safety from the Department of Interior to the Department of Labor.

The bill, H.R. 4287, the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 is to be considered by the House of Representatives today.

Rahall feels that this transfer of MESA to the Labor Department will increase communications between MESA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the two agencies that have the most responsibility for protecting the workers' health and will minimize jurisdictional disputes and bureaucratic squabbling.

"I believe the transfer of MESA from a department whose mission is to increase coal production to a department whose mission is to protect the well-being of the American worker, will be a big step towards ending a lot of bureaucratic red tape," Congressman Rahall observed.

"President Carter's energy program calls for a massive expansion of coal mining, and if we intend to make coal our nation's principal fuel, the 211,800 coal miners in this country must be protected against the hazards of their work," Rahall pointed out. "In my campaign for this office, I said that I would push harder and more effectively to see that the concerns of southern West Virginia were not only heard, but that action would be taken and I see this bill as a step in that direction."

Congressman Rahall also pointed out that efforts are under way in the House of Representatives this week to push for quick action on the Black Lung Reform Act of 1977. "I have received the personal assurance of Speaker of the House Tip O' Neill that the House Rules Committee will move the measure to the House floor within the next few weeks."