

News  
From \_\_\_\_\_

CONGRESSMAN

# Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Michael Serpe  
202-225-3452

Washington D.C. --- U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall (D-4th), said that Strip Mining Bill which was approved by a House-Senate Conference Committee on Thursday, "is a strong bill in regards to the protection of our land yet a fair bill that still allows an increase in our nation's coal production."

Congressman Rahall, the only West Virginia representative on the Committee and the only freshman, pointed out, "The provisions in the bill that require that our land be returned to its' original contour after mining, are tough. I also believe that the members of the Conference Committee realize that good uses for the land can come about even after mining."

Rahall explained that exemptions are contained in the final strip mining measure to insure that the small operator is not driven out of business because of the new law.

"Most important of all to West Virginia surface miners," Rahall stated, "is that all states must adhere to the minimum federal guidelines, thereby eliminating the unfair competitive disadvantage West Virginia operators have worked under due to the law West Virginia has had on the books."

"~~States~~ may still administer and enforce their own surface mining laws, if the Secretary of Interior determines that the individual state law meets the guidelines set up in the new bill," Rahall went on to say.

Congressman Rahall, participating in his first Conference Committee said, "I was to be a member of the 20 member House-Senate Conference Committee that hammered the final version of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1977. I found it challenging and at times grueling."

"I found a great spirit of cooperation and willingness to work together by all the members of the Committee, regardless of their personnel positions on the bill. There was a great deal of give and take shown by all," Rahall observed.

"I was also pleased to find the same spirit of respect and cooperation among both industry and environmental representatives on hand for the Committee's sessions," Congressman Rahall said. "In all it was a great effort for our nation and for the State of West Virginia."