

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washington D.C. ---U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall (D-4th), announced his support for HR 2, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, that was passed by the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs this week. Rahall is a member of the Committee and voted in favor of the bill.

Citing that the bill will, "establish minimum national guidelines for regulating surface coal mining and reclamation, it will also set up a program for the reclamation of previously mined land," Rahall went on to explain his reasons for supporting the measure, "importantly, HR 2 will not impose needless federal red tape upon coal producers in West Virginia."

HR 2 will also mean a great deal to coal producers in West Virginia, Congressman Rahall explained, "HR 2 will do away with the unfair advantage coal producers in other states have had over West Virginia producers. By making all states comply with a national law, all surface mining operations will have to follow that same set of guidelines."

Rahall pointed out however, that HR 2 will not superimpose any West Virginia law now on the books. "The State House of Delegates recently passed a measure that puts West Virginia in compliance with the provisions of HR 2 right now. Therefore, there will be no federal intervention into the way our state regulates and enforces surface mining laws."

Congressman Rahall quoted from HR 2 itself to show that the states will play the major role in enforcement, "because of the diversity in terrain...and other physical conditions...in the mining areas, the primary governmental responsibility ...for enforcing regulations for surface mining and reclamation operations sub- to this Act (HR 2), should rest with the States."

Rahall observed that the legislation would not conflict with Pres. Carter's energy goal of increasing coal production by two-thirds. "HR 2 will go before the full House of Representatives on April 28, and if passed, I am confident the President will sign the measure into law," Rahall concluded.

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