

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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Washington D.C. --- Fourth District Congressman Nick J. Rahall, (D-WV), has told Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall, that a "severe void exists in the location of Black Lung field offices in southern West Virginia." The Department of Labor recently announced that field offices would be located in Beckley and Princeton, with the Black Lung District Office to be located in Charleston.

In his letter to Marshall, Congressman Rahall said, "Beckley and Princeton are both excellent locations for field offices to assist black lung victims and their families, however, I believe that lack of a black lung field office in either Logan or Welch is not only a mistake on the part of the Department of Labor, but a disservice to those who live in the largest coal producing region of West Virginia."

Congressman Rahall pointed out that, "Logan and Welch residents are isolated to an extent from the Beckley and Princeton offices due the condition of secondary and primary roads. It could take from 2½ to 5 hours for a miner and his family to reach either of the present offices and return."

"I urge reconsideration of the field office locations," Rahall asserted. "To me an additional office in either Logan or Welch is greatly needed, and would keep more in line with the intent of the Black Lung legislation that not only seeks to improve the law, but also allows black lung victims and their families greater accessibility to DOL representatives in the coal fields."

The Black Lung field offices are to serve as reference centers for black lung victims and their families. At the present time, two Department of Labor staff members are to work in each office.

Congressman Rahall has also been in contact with UMWA President Arnold Miller to seek his support in obtaining more Field Offices in southern West Virginia.