

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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Washington D.C. --- Fourth District Congressman Nick J. Rahall, (D-WV), announced today that the Interstate Commerce Commission plans to hold a series of 38 coast-to-coast hearings to invite public comment on a recently-published Department of Transportation report on the future of Amtrak rail passenger service. One of the cities to hold a hearing will be Bluefield, West Virginia.

"These public hearings will provide southern West Virginia residents with a unique opportunity to express their concern for the proposed elimination of the Hilltopper Route," Rahall said. At the present time, the Hilltopper, along with 14 other Amtrak routes would be affected by the reductions.

Congressman Rahall pointed out that, "Under the Department of Transportation's recommendations, the Amtrak national system is to be reduced from 27,000 to 18,900 miles, and before any action is taken, I believe that a close look should be taken at the entire system."

Rahall expressed a great concern over the possible elimination of the Hilltopper. "Residents of southern West Virginia are severely limited by transportation alternatives. Many towns and communities do not have airplane service, bus service, and now Amtrak is planning to halt the train service. To do so, would cut off many southern West Virginia regions from major transportation lines."

Congressman Rahall went on to say, "Passenger train service has a future in southern West Virginia. However, no train will ever be successful if the operators do not do the job that is necessary to promote the route and to provide the route with up-to-date equipment."

At the present time, Rahall observed, "Amtrak is still not informing potential riders of the Hilltoppers' availability, through a better advertising program."