

News
From

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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Washington D.C. --- West Virginia's Fourth District Congressman Nick J. Rahall, has blasted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for what he calls, "a dirty public media blitz against the expanded use of coal."

Congressman Rahall, in a letter to E.P.A. chief, Douglas Costle, took issue with a \$40,000 anti-coal theatrical show, sponsored by E.P.A., which played during August to communities along the Ohio River.

(An August 19, New York Times article concerning the show is below.)

"How can we as a nation ever hope to achieve energy independence when one of the major Federal agencies concerned with energy policy is under-cutting the use of our most abundant energy resource, coal," Rahall charged.

"Congress and the American people deserve an explanation into E.P.A.'s support and allocation of \$40,000 to carry out this behind-the-back stab at coal," Rahall said. "I would think E.P.A. could certainly come up with a more constructive program to spend this money on."

In conclusion, Rahall observed, "If I didn't know better, I would swear that OPEC was behind this whole thing. This just proves E.P.A.'s bias against coal."

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 1979

E.P.A. Show, on the Ohio, Floats Warnings

By IVER PETERSON
Special to The New York Times

JEFFERSONVILLE, Ind., Aug. 17 — As President Carter and his staff steamed down the Mississippi campaigning for the Administration's energy program, another Federal troupe wended its way down the Ohio with a far more cautionary message about energy development.

"Live! On the River" is a cheery, dancy, hand-clapping show that, on a Federal shoestring, has been offering songs and dialogue in three dozen Ohio River towns, from Pennsylvania to Kentucky and Illinois. The show presents a far more ambivalent message about the opportunities for energy development in the country than the President has outlined.

The \$40,000 shoestring, which has sustained the cast of five plus a piano-player, came from the Environmental Protection Agency. The Federal agency had been watching nervously as cries for cheap and abundant energy seemed to overpower the voices of environmentalists who warned that the forms of energy available in this country today, chiefly coal and nuclear power, carried high environmental risks.

In the Ohio River Valley, winding from Pittsburgh to Cairo, Ill., the name of the energy game is coal. The greatly increased use of coal that President Carter has called for — let alone the visions of riches from local coal that dance in the heads of politicians in the coal-mining states of Pennsylvania,

Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky and Illinois — has the E.P.A. frankly worried.

"Here's Jay Rockefeller, saying that we have enough coal in this area for the whole country, and that all we have to do is dig it," said Frank Corrado, the public affairs officer for the Environmental Protection Agency's Chicago office, referring to Gov. John D. Rockefeller 4th of West Virginia. It was Mr. Corrado who conceived the idea of the musical troupe.

"They're calling the Ohio River Valley the Golden Triangle for energy," he said, "but coal-burning is one of the dirtiest forms of energy there is. We want to make people think about the choices that are involved."

"Live!" Does just that, with a cast of characters complete with an obnoxious New York television producer — a little pandering to Middle Western prejudices — a pretty girl, a fiddle-playing Stephen Foster and two Mark Twains, one presented as the genuine article, the other as a fake.

Foster and the real Twain, figures from America's Middle Western river past, come back from the grave when they hear the sugar-coated claptrap about the Ohio River that the New York producer is putting on film on the assumption that, as he puts it, people are tired of the bad news. They want to hear something good for a change. No one wants to hear about stopping pollution and industry.

An Appeal for the Little Person.

"But the E.P.A. makes them listen. 'Air and water pollution, strip mining, chemical wastes, you can't cover them over with happy-time television,'" pleads the girl.

The dialogue and songs tread a thin line of neutrality between the choices of conveniences against environment, of jobs against environment, of low costs against environment, until the show-stopping number that spells it all out. It comes down to "bugs in the bathtub, or chemicals in your sink," and "a clean and peaceful countryside, or a paycheck every week."

"The intent was to come up with a zero sum," Robert Robbins, producer of the show, said after today's performance at the venerable Howard Steamboat Museum here on the banks of the Ohio just across from Louisville, Ky. "It's nonadvocacy. The idea is to get people thinking about the quality of life in the whole river area. Instead of just their own little place."

The Federal agency's venture into political theater, however subdued, was prompted by an asserted desire to reach "the grass roots" with its message of choices in energy matters, Mr. Robbins said. "You can't do it just with public hearings," he said. "They only draw the special-interest groups anyway."

The troupe will end its tour, after its 60th show in about 34 cities, in Evansville, Ind., on Aug. 26. It has been performing since the middle of July.