

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RAHALL AT WHITE
HOUSE MEETING, DECEMBER 20.

MR. PRESIDENT, I AM PLEASED THAT TODAY, WORDS ARE TURNING INTO ACTIONS.

AS MY COLLEAGUES FROM COAL PRODUCING STATES, COAL MINERS, COAL PRODUCERS, AND I HAVE STRESSED REPEATEDLY FOR MANY MONTHS NOW, COAL, OUR MOST ABUNDANT NATURAL ENERGY RESOURCE, HOLDS THE KEY TO REDUCING OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL.

THE INITIATION LAST JULY, OF YOUR EFFORTS TO PUSH FOR UTILITY PLANT CONVERSION FROM OIL TO COAL, IS ONE OF THE GOALS WE HAVE BEEN WORKING TOWARDS, AND IT IS OUR DESIRE TO SPEED UP THIS PROCESS.

TO CONVERT, NOW. TO USE COAL, NOW. THAT IS WHY WE ARE HERE.

THERE IS A GAMUT OF FACTS AND FIGURES ESPOUSING THE BENEFITS OF COAL CONVERSION, SUCH AS: AN IMMEDIATE DECREASE IN OIL CONSUMPTION, AND THE UTILIZATION OF THE ALMOST 150 MILLION TONS OF SURPLUS COAL; BUT FROM A HUMAN STANDPOINT, CONVERSION WILL MEAN JOBS AGAIN FOR MANY OF THE 17,000 MINERS PRESENTLY OUT OF WORK.

AS I AM SURE YOU ARE AWARE, MR. PRESIDENT, THERE IS AN AIR OF DISILLUSIONMENT AMONG MINERS WHO HAVE BEEN LAYED-OFF WORK, AND AMONG SMALL MINE OPERATORS WHO HAVE SHUT DOWN THEIR FACILITIES DUE TO THE LACK OF COAL USE. THEY HEAR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, CONGRESSMEN, AND SENATORS CLAMORING, "WHY NOT COAL?" BUT THEY HAVE YET TO SEE ANY TANGIBLE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION.

I SENSED THIS FEELING LAST WEEK, WHEN I ADDRESSED THE UNITED MINE WORKERS CONVENTION IN DENVER, AND FOUND IT NECESSARY TO ASSURE THE DELEGATES THAT THERE WERE PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON WORKING FOR THEM.

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THOSE WHO ARE DISILLUSIONED TO KNOW WHO THEIR FRIENDS ARE. THE CONGRESSIONAL COAL GROUP HAS SERVED AS A WATCH-DOG FOR COAL, AND I BELIEVE WE HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IN BRINGING ABOUT AN AWARENESS THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO COAL.

BUT, MR. PRESIDENT, THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

THIS EFFORT WILL TAKE CONTINUED COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONGRESS, SO THAT IN THE FUTURE WE WILL HAVE MORE SUCCESSES LIKE: THE SYNTHETIC FUELS BILL, THE ENERGY MOBILIZATION BOARD, AND A STRONG WIND-FALL PROFITS TAX.

"COAL NOW" IS THE CRY THROUGHOUT THE COAL STATES, AND I WILL BE FRANK, MR. PRESIDENT, THESE STATES ARE POLITICALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU IN THE YEAR TO COME.

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