

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DEC. 15, 1981

CONTACT: MIKE SERPE
202-225-3452

RAHALL SUPPORTS BLACK LUNG FUND SOLVENCY BILL

WASHINGTON D.C. --- WEST VIRGINIA'S FOURTH DISTRICT CONGRESSMAN NICK J. RAHALL, HAS ANNOUNCED HIS SUPPORT FOR A BILL WHICH IS AIMED AT REDUCING THE LARGE AND EVER GROWING DEFICIT IN THE BLACK LUNG DISABILITY TRUST FUND.

THE MEASURE, HR 5159, IS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15.

CONGRESSMAN RAHALL POINTED OUT THAT THIS LEGISLATION WILL, "TEMPORARILY DOUBLE THE PRESENT COAL EXCISE TAX PAID BY EVERY OPERATOR ON A PER TON BASIS INTO THE TRUST FUND." RAHALL ALSO NOTED THAT, "THIS BILL CONTAINS A PROVISION WHICH REQUIRES LATE PAYMENTS INTO THE FUND TO BE ASSESSED THE CURRENT MARKET RATE OF INTEREST."

"THIS PROPOSAL IS SUPPORTED BY COAL PRODUCERS, COAL MINERS AND THE ADMINISTRATION," RAHALL OBSERVED, "AND I FULLY INTEND TO SUPPORT IT."

CONGRESSMAN RAHALL DID STRESS HOWEVER, "WHILE THIS MEASURE SEEKS TO BRING SOLVENCY TO THE BLACK LUNG TRUST FUND, WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT NO OTHER PROVISIONS ARE ADDED THAT WILL IMPACT ON THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THOSE WHO MINE THIS NATION'S COAL SUPPLIES."

"BLACK LUNG AND MINE DISASTERS, AS WE HAVE SEEN RECENTLY, REPRESENT A TWO-PRONGED RISK FACED BY COAL MINERS," RAHALL OBSERVED, "THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM IS THAT THE FORMER BRING IMMEDIATE DEATH, THE LATTER A SLOW AND AGONIZING DEATH."

"IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER," RAHALL SAID, "THAT EACH BLACK LUNG STATISTIC REPRESENTS A HUMAN BEING, AND WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN TO ASSIST THEM."