

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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WASHINGTON D.C. --- "I AM PLEASED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S PROMPT RESPONSE TO MY INQUIRY, AND AM ENCOURAGED THAT THEY ARE MAKING EVERY ATTEMPT TO RECTIFY PROBLEMS IN THE BLACK LUNG PROGRAM," STATED WEST VIRGINIA'S FOURTH DISTRICT CONGRESSMAN NICK J. RAHALL, FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH LABOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS YESTERDAY IN WASHINGTON.

THE THREE-HOUR SESSION WAS THE RESULT OF CONGRESSMAN RAHALL'S LETTER TO SECRETARY OF LABOR RAY MARSHALL, EARLIER THIS MONTH, OUTLINING SPECIFIC DOWNFALLS IN THE DEPARTMENT'S PROCESSION OF BLACK LUNG CLAIMS.

"IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT MY OFFICE HAS MADE OVER 700 INQUIRIES INTO BLACK LUNG CASES OF MINERS IN THE FOURTH DISTRICT SINCE JANUARY OF THIS YEAR," RAHALL POINTED OUT. "THE LARGEST SINGLE TOTAL OF ANY OTHER CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT."

RAHALL WENT ON TO SAY, "AFTER REVIEWING SPECIFIC CASES OF LOST FILES AND EXCESSIVE DELAYS IN THE PROGESSION OF CLAIMS, THE LABOR DEPARTMENT STRESSED THEIR DESIRE TO SEE CHANGES MADE."

"AS A MATTER OF FACT," RAHALL POINTED OUT, "AS A RESULT OF MY LETTER, I WAS HAPPY TO FIND THAT SECRETARY MARSHALL HAS INITIATED LENGTHY HIGH LEVEL STAFF DISCUSSIONS OF PROCEDURAL IMPROVEMENTS."

CONGRESSMAN RAHALL SAID THAT HIS SESSION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WILL BE FOLLOWED BY FURTHER MEETINGS WITH THE UNITED MINE WORKERS, BLACK LUNG ASSOCIATIONS THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, THE LABOR DEPARTMENT AND HIMSELF.

"I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL PARTIES INVOLVED KNOW WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED FOR THE QUICK PROCESSINF OF CLAIMS, AND WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IN REGARDS TO THE PROCESSING TIME," RAHALL EXPLAINED. "I PLAN TO MEET WITH THE U.M.A. AND OTHERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE."