

News  
From \_\_\_\_\_

CONGRESSMAN

# Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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Good morning.

With the beginning of a new year and new decade, we now look ahead to the hopes and challenges of the coming year, and that is what I would like to do this morning.

In the future I expect, the 1970's will be looked back upon as the time when Americans developed an awareness about energy. And as the decade ended with the crisis in Iran, we certainly came to realize how important it is for the United States to become energy self-sufficient.

However, even while energy was moving to the national forefront, an old enemy, inflation, was again lurking to drain the pocketbook of every American, especially our older citizens, whom living on fixed incomes were the hardest hit by the rising cost-of-living.

With escalating costs for gasoline, electricity and other forms of energy worsening the inflation rate, there is no doubt that inflation and energy rank, 1A and 1B as priorities for the 80's.

In 1979, alone, energy costs doubled, therefore making it the single largest contributor to inflation. OPEC's price increases cost every man, woman and child in the United States \$133 each, and for a family of four, that meant \$532 more was spent on goods as a direct result of our dependence on foreign oil.

I am confident, the programs aimed at reducing our addiction to imported energy will go a long way to stifle inflation, protect the national security, and of direct benefit to West Virginia, put many of the 10,000 unemployed miners back to work.

The energy initiatives already begun by Congress last session, like the Energy Mobilization Board (S. 1308), the Synthetic Fuels proposal (S. 932), the Windfall Profits Tax (HR. 3919), plus new legislation for the greater utilization of coal through utility plant conversion, are all major cogs in a National Energy Policy.

The final approval of these measures are top priorities of mine, as well as for my colleagues on the Congressional Coal Group which I chair.

Also on my personal work-list for this year, will be: a major push for the passage of the bill to provide long-term flood protection for the Tug Fork Valley (HR. 4788). As a matter of fact, this measure will be taken up by the full House on our first day back in session, next Tuesday.

-Legislation to change automobile bumper standards which in turn may save jobs for the employees of Houdille Industries here in Huntington, is on tap for final consideration (S. 1159).

-The passage of a bill I have co-sponsored, to provide a twice a year cost-of-living increase for Social Security recipients, which is desperately needed in these inflationary times (HR. 2139).

-And legislation, which I have sponsored, to clear up administrative problems within the Black Lung program, specifically in regards to the off-set of disability payments (HR. 5038). The bill will face committee action early this year.

Of course these are only a few of the many challenges that will be faced in the coming year. But regardless of the number of issues or their complexity, I pledge my commitment to work for and represent the people of the Fourth District, the State of West Virginia, and nation to the best of my ability.

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## MAJOR ACTIONS OF THE 96TH CONGRESS

### BUDGET

- Appropriations, FY 1980: following a line of budgetary restraint, Congress placed less emphasis on initiating major new spending programs and more emphasis on improving the operation of programs already in place. The Fiscal Year 1980 budget was therefore, \$10.7 Billion less than what was requested by the President. Rep. Rahall supported.

### CONSUMER ISSUES

- Asbestos: a measure was passed to assist local educational agencies identify and control the exposure of school children to dangerous asbestos fibers. Rep. Rahall supported.
- Federal Trade Commission Improvements: legislation was passed that established a congressional review and possible veto of FTC regulations, and encourage the use of alternatives other than government regulations. Rep. Rahall supported.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Appalachian Regional Commission: measure co-sponsored by Rep. Rahall, passed the House that would extend funding for the A.R.C. for two years. Since 1965, the A.R.C. has spurred the development of projects in southern West Virginia totaling over \$1.1 billion.

### ENERGY

- Congressional Coal Group: founded and chaired by Congressman Rahall, to serve as a watch-dog for coal legislation and coal policy on the national level. 65 members from coal producing and coal using States.
- Energy Mobilization Board: legislation designed to cut through local, state and federal red-tape and expedite urgent energy projects. Includes the Rahall Amendment to speed up utility plant conversion to coal.
- Home Energy Assistance: provides funds for emergency assistance to help needy families pay spiraling fuel costs. Cabell County received, \$286,235, and Wayne County received, \$112,231, from this program. Rep. Rahall supported.
- Synthetic Fuels: legislation co-sponsored by Rep. Rahall, to direct the President to achieve a national goal of 2 million barrels a day of syn-fuels. Synthetic fuels will come from coal, oil shale and alcohol.
- Windfall Profits Tax: a nearly 60 percent tax on newly decontrolled U.S. oil, which would yield \$277 Billion over the next ten years. Rep. Rahall supported.

### VETERANS

- Disability Compensation: a new law provides a 9.9 percent increase in disability compensation for veterans and survivors benefits. The measure assists 2.3 million disabled veterans. Rep. Rahall supported.