

# RAHALL *Report*

## FLOOD PROTECTION

by Congressman Nick J. Rahall, II

In April of 1977, one of the most devastating floods in the history of our region of the country, brought havoc and destruction to the residents of southern West Virginia. Few need to be reminded about how severe this disaster was.

While over \$30 million has been spent on various flood control measures in the Tug Valley since the flood, the fear of a heavy downpour has not disappeared. And worst of all, now the Reagan Administration has eliminated all funding for further studies and construction of a long-term flood control project for southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky.

We no doubt all realize that it is imperative for the Federal Government to cut back on its' operation and spending. But I point out, that the \$400 million price tag for this flood project, equals the amount it costs Americans to run the Defense Department for only eleven hours.

It seems to me that a word has been lacking from the vocabulary of the highest officials of the Administration--the word is "priority".

I fear the budget decisions recently made by Mr. David Stockman--and those above him--are heartless and grossly unfair. They have become so obsessed with cuts--upon cuts--upon cuts, that they have become blind to the simple needs of the people.

Hardly protection from ravaging flood waters is a luxury item.

When the United States was still very young, one of its founders, Thomas Jefferson stated, "The care of human life, and not its destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government."

Although this country is over 200 years old, these words have not diminished in their importance. Ours is still a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Nothing in the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence earmarks special treatment for a certain class of individuals.

The flood protection I seek for the Tug Valley is a fair and worthwhile desire. I hope the Reagan Administration realizes this soon.