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**RAHALL WANTS FUNDS FOR ABANDONED MINES & COAL RESEARCH**

Washington D.C. --- West Virginia's Fourth District Congressman Nick J. Rahall, told the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior that, "Now is the time to not only make a large dent in the extensive inventory of abandoned mine lands, but also to battle unemployment through the jobs that reclamation projects create."

Rahall, chairman of the Congressional Coal Group, pointed out that the current unappropriated balance of \$600 Million in the Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Fund must be used to deal with, "the burning slag piles, dangerous mine openings, acid mine drainage and old tipplles causing hazards to the health and safety of the people living in Appalachia and other coal-producing regions of our nation."

Congressman Rahall explained the importance of the Abandoned Mines program on the employment picture. Rahall said, "For each \$1 Million in reclamation money spent, 50 full-time jobs are created." "Therefore," Rahall stated, "an appropriation of \$320 Million for State Reclamation Grants would create 16,000 jobs in the coal and construction industries."

"In West Virginia, it is important that we receive our fair share of this fund," Congressman Rahall stressed, "because since the advent of the reclamation program, West Virginia coal producers have paid \$104 Million in fees, while the State has only received \$13 Million on its contribution."

With regard to coal research funding, Congressman Rahall termed the Reagan Administration's Coal Research and Development Budget, "unacceptable." "I just cannot believe we have let the fossil energy budget decline from 22 percent of the Energy Department's budget, to only 7 percent," Rahall said.

"I ask you to strike a blow for America's energy security," Rahall challenged the subcommittee members, "For those who are concerned over acid rain, for those who wish to provide consumers with low-cost electricity, and for those who want to protect the health and safety of our coal labor force and to increase mine productivity, I say support coal research and development," Rahall stated.