

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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CONTACT: Michael Serpe
202-225-3452

RAHALL TO OPPOSE SUMMERSVILLE LAKE PROJECT

Washington D.C. --- Following hearings by the House Public Works Subcommittee on Water Resources, on which he serves, West Virginia's Fourth District Congressman Nick Rahall, today announced his opposition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plan to build a hydroelectric power facility at Summersville Lake on the Gauley River.

"After two weeks of extensive hearings, and informative testimony from a number of West Virginians who traveled to Washington to express their concerns on this project, as well as from the Corps," Rahall observed, "I have come to the conclusion that the project outlined by the Corps is a pie-in-the-sky dream that does not warrant support."

The project would make modifications to the present Summersville Lake facility for the generation of electricity. Involved in the plan would be a 3-mile tunnel in which to connect the lake and the powerplant.

"It's a 'Star Wars' scheme that is just not needed or wanted in West Virginia," Congressman Rahall stated.

Rahall explained, "First of all, neither the need nor the customers for hydroelectric power in the area are defined, especially when the hills of West Virginia are full of the finest electric generating source in the world---coal."

"To give the go-ahead to this effort, would only further put more coal miners out of work," Rahall concluded.

"I am also concerned about the potential loss of nearly \$3 million in yearly revenues from the whitewater business in our region of our State," Rahall pointed out. "Witnesses before my subcommittee stated that the proposed modifications would divert water out of the upper most three miles of the Gauley River, and endanger possible future Wild and Scenic River Status."

"In addition to the loss of the revenue to the State," Rahall went on to say, "West Virginia would face additional financial outlays in order to reach the 100 percent cost recovery scheme proposed. I dare say this would be difficult in today's budget crunch in our State."

Rahall concluded by explaining that the elimination of the initial 3-mile "warm-up" zone of the raft trip on the Gauley, places rafters in increased danger of mishaps when the more difficult portion of the trip is reached.

The legislation under consideration calls for \$122 million in start-up funds for the Summersville project.