

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RAHALL WANTS REAGAN TO TALK COAL

WASHINGTON D.C. --- IN A LETTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, WEST VIRGINIA'S FOURTH DISTRICT CONGRESSMAN NICK J. RAHALL, SAID, "AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE WILLIAMSBURG SUMMIT, I URGE YOU TO GIVE FULL CONSIDERATION TO THE DEVASTATED ECONOMY IN THE COAL PRODUCING REGIONS OF OUR NATION."

RAHALL STRESSED, "WITH 32 PERCENT OF THE COAL LABOR FORCE UNEMPLOYED, THE NEED TO INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR U.S. COAL IN EUROPE AND JAPAN SHOULD BE PARAMOUNT DURING YOUR DISCUSSIONS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE WITH THE LEADERS OF BRITIAN, FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, ITALY, CANADA, JAPAN, AND THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET COMMISSION OVER THE MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND."

THE TEXT OF CONGRESSMAN RAHALL'S LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT IS ON THE REVERSE SIDE:

The Honorable Ronald Reagan
President of the United States
of America
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare for the Williamsburg Summit, I urge you to give full consideration to the devastated economy in the coal producing regions of our Nation. With 32 percent of the coal labor force unemployed, the need to increase the demand for U.S. coal in Europe and Japan should be paramount during your discussions on international trade with the leaders of Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and the European Common Market Commission over the Memorial Day weekend.

After the 1982 Versailles Summit, National Security Advisor William Clark wrote to inform me that the Summit communique specifically mentioned coal. He assured me that your Administration will place maximum emphasis on coal particularly as you prepare for the Williamsburg meeting. Earlier this year, after your meeting with Prime Minister Nakasone of Japan, the Department of State informed me that an agreement was made to establish a U.S.-Japan Energy Working Group. One of the group's task will be to examine the potential for increases in the U.S.-Japan coal trade.

You are to be commended for these actions. However, they have yet to have a noticeable effect on the coal export trade. The total annual capacity for coal at U.S. ports now stands at 320 million short tons, an improvement largely made possible due to a surge in private investment in shoreside facilities. The 105 million tons of coal exported by the U.S. in 1982 falls far short of the maximum port capacity. Without a doubt, we have the manpower and economic incentives in place to serve a greater portion of the coal requirements of Europe and Japan. The potential of U.S. coal exports is tampered only by the failure to deepen U.S. port channels and certain actions of the Interstate Commerce Commission which will serve to increase railroad rates on export coal. During my conversations with European coal buyers, these two issues were consistently raised as matters of great concern and of which cast doubt over a U.S. commitment to becoming more than a marginal supplier of coal.

When it comes to the coal trade, the role of the U.S. Administration is of crucial importance. In testimony taken by Congressional committees and during the coal trade missions conducted under the auspices of the Department of Commerce, it has been made clear that foreign coal buyers of U.S. coal are looking for signals from your Administration that you will make efforts to increase the coal trade.

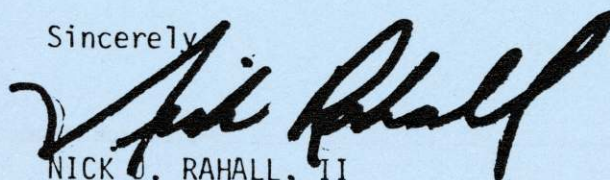
During the 1979 Tokyo Summit a pledge was made to encourage the development of the international coal trade. This pledge was reinforced during the 1980 Venice Summit and as previously mentioned, at the 1982 Versailles Summit. I ask that you follow through on these past commitments to export coal by examining the problems faced by U.S. coal exporters as part of your pre-Summit activities. These problems and the importance of coal exports to our balance of trade and the energy security of our Allies should also be made clear to the trade and finance ministers representing the U.S., the European Community, Japan and Canada who will hold a joint meeting in Paris next week. In addition, more emphasis should be placed on the importance the U.S. attaches to coal exports in the Summit communique evolving from the Williamsburg meeting.

Finally, I ask that you renew the commitment you made during your State of the Union message in January to a port modernization bill and that you review the decision of the Interstate Commerce Commission to exempt railroad rates on coal export traffic from regulation.

With your assistance, Mr. President, we may work to alleviate the great suffering taking place in the Nation's coalfields by increasing the demand for U.S. coal abroad.

With warm regard, I am

Sincerely,



NICK O. RAHALL, II
Member of Congress