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REGULATIONS & DIPLOMATIC FAILURES THREATEN EXPORT COAL

Baltimore, Maryland --- "The reasons for the current depressed U.S. export coal situation are many," stated U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall, (D-WV), "but Interstate Commerce Commission regulations lead the list."

Congressman Rahall's remarks came at the opening session of the "World Coal Export Conference" in Baltimore.

"The number one threat to export coal is the I.C.C.'s decision to exempt from regulation export coal moved by railroads," Rahall observed. "The Commission has clearly undermined the balance between the needs of shippers and those of the carriers.....and has consistently ignored the provisions of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980."

Rahall, a native of the coal regions of southern West Virginia, pointed out his legislation, HR 2584, is designed to, "correct the serious deficiencies in I.C.C. coal-related decisions."

On the issue of diplomatic efforts, Congressman Rahall informed the Conference, "I have a file in my office labeled: 'stonewall', containing letters I have written to the Administration regarding export coal. 'Stonewall' represents the type of response we have received."

"My criticism of the administration on its coal exports record is not partisan," Rahall said. "Many of my Republican colleagues have joined me in expressing concern."

Congressman Rahall claimed, "Other countries want to see the U.S. government make a commitment to coal. If the present Administration chooses not to make a commitment, so be it. But you can be sure that there are many members of Congress, including myself, who will continue to seek not only legislative, but diplomatic means to facilitate coal exports."

In his address, Rahall, chairman of the Congressional Coal Group, also discussed legislation dealing with port and harbor improvements and the cargo preference issue.

"Coal has much to offer America, and the world," Rahall stated. "Pressure must come from the public---and private sector."

Congressman Rahall concluded by challenging the Conference attendees, "It is time for us to move forward, to get the coal industry and this nation back on a solid foundation."