

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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WATER LEGISLATION IMPORTANT TO COAL SAYS RAHALL

Washington D.C. --- Legislation reauthorizing the Clean Water Act, containing a key provision introduced by West Virginia's Fourth District Congressman Nick Rahall, was approved by the House of Representatives.

Congressman Rahall explained during floor debate on the bill, "My provision establishes a new program for companies reopening abandoned coal mines, to actually improve the overall water quality in the area of the mine."

"There are in excess of one million acres of abandoned coal mine lands, with the vast majority located in Appalachia," Rahall pointed out, "and from a water quality perspective, many of these mine lands are currently discharging pollutants - and will continue to do so - unless the coal industry remines or reclaims them."

"My provision," stressed the Congressman, "offers the incentive the coal industry needs to carry out the remining and reclaiming of these abandoned coal mine sites."

Rahall stated, "In the past, national standards made it often technically or economically unfeasible - especially for small coal operators - to remine these abandoned sites."

"Now my provision," Rahall said, "allows a case-by-case evaluation by the individual State or the Environmental Protection Agency to modify the national standards, if there is a potential for improving the overall water quality in the area of the mine site."

"This provision will allow the needed flexibility to set water quality standards, at the mine site, so as to entice the coal industry into remining and reclaiming an abandoned mine site, that otherwise would be hazardous to the environment," Congressman Rahall concluded.