

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL VOWS TO FIGHT NEW THREAT TO APPALACHIAN COAL

Increased electric utility use of Canadian power imports from the North and imported coal entering this country from the South presents a Dual Threat to southern West Virginia and all Appalachian coal producers, Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) told the Southern Coals Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, today.

The level of Canadian power imported into the U.S. by Northeastern electric utilities has doubled since 1973 and the Canadians are building far beyond their domestic need, Rep. Rahall said. "Canada is developing like a banana republic for electricity and is aggressively selling this excess power in the U.S. and many Northeastern electric utilities are taking the bait," Rep. Rahall charged.

"As such, today we are faced with the prospect of Canadian power imports displacing the equivalent of 25 million annual tons of coal in the Northeast," he added.

Rep. Rahall said that he would like these electric utilities to have the option to Buy American. "It seems to me that these utilities could purchase West Virginia and Midwestern coal-generated electricity instead of Canadian power if given the opportunity," Rahall stated. "In this regard, I will consider legislation during the next Congress to facilitate the transmission of coal-generated electricity from our region to the Northeast." Rep. Rahall also said that he will continue with his efforts to assist these utilities in converting to coal through modifications to the Clean Air Act and by insuring that railroad coal rates are reasonable.

Citing recent purchases of Columbian coal by a Florida electric utility, the threat from the South is equally alarming, Rahall said.

"Coal imports doubled in 1983 and if this imported coal is being dumped in this country at below fair market value or if it is being subsidized by foreign governments then we should seek relief under U.S. trade law," Rahall stated. "If our trade laws need to be beefed-up with respect to coal imports, and for that matter, coke imports, I would be pleased to pursue legislation in this area," he added.