

News
From _____

Nick Rahall

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 20, 1984

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RAHALL STUDY EXAMINES USES OF WV COAL: INDICATES BRIGHT FUTURE

Washington, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today released a statistical study on the production and domestic uses of West Virginia coal. Using 1983 data not generally available to the public, the study traces every ton of West Virginia coal by origin county for use by individual domestic electric utility plants, and lists production by county for use at coke plants.

"The purpose of this study is to provide a solid basis on which to make legislative and regulatory policy decisions," Rep. Rahall said. "This information will be especially helpful during our consideration of the acid rain issue and other matters relating to the Clean Air Act."

Overall, in 1983 the electric utility industry purchased 65.6 million tons of West Virginia coal, 13 million tons went to coke plants, almost 30 million tons was sold on the export market, 7.3 million tons went for industrial uses and the about 680 thousand tons was for residential or commercial applications.

Powerplants in 20 states purchased West Virginia steam coal during 1983, with 12 of these states using coal produced in the counties which comprise Rahall's Fourth Congressional District. In total, 48 electric utility companies burned West Virginia coal with 19 of them purchasing 11.3 million tons of Fourth District coal.

According to Rep. Rahall, powerplants located in West Virginia were the single largest users of steam coal produced in the state, followed by, in their order, those in Ohio, North Carolina, Michigan and Pennsylvania. Electric utilities in those five states purchased 51.6 million tons of the total amount of West Virginia coal used by U.S. powerplants in 1983.

The largest domestic users of steam coal produced in Rep. Rahall's District were, in their order, electric utilities located in North Carolina, West Virginia, Ohio, Massachusetts and Michigan. Electric utilities in those five states purchased 9.8 million tons of the total amount of Fourth District Coal burned by U.S. powerplants in 1983.

However, Appalachian Power's West Virginia plants--Amos, Kanawha River and Mountaineer--were the single largest electric utility users of Fourth District steam coal followed closely by Carolina Power and Light's plants in North Carolina.

"We found that two counties, Logan and Mingo, were responsible for 10.2 million tons of the 11.3 million tons of coal purchased by the domestic electric utility industry in 1983 from the counties in my District," Rahall noted.

With respect to metallurgical coal, the counties in Rahall's District produced 8.9 million tons of the state total of 13 million tons used by coke plants. "My Congressional District is responsible for 24% of all the coal used to produce coke in this Nation," Rahall added.

In 1983, 115.1 million tons of coal were produced in West Virginia with 36.7 million tons of this amount produced in Rahall's District.

"I'm very optimistic about the future," Rahall stated. "My study shows that in the 20 states currently being served by West Virginia steam coal, there is a great deal of planned additional coal-fired electrical generating capacity. In Florida alone, by 1993, 6,147 megawatts of new electrical generation from coal should come on line. To put that figure in perspective, the largest coal-fired powerplant in West Virginia is AEP's 2,900 megawatt John Amos plant which burns over 5 million tons of coal per year."

"With respect to the steam coal produced in my District, it would be the fuel of choice for many of these new electric utility powerplants due to it's low-sulfur, high-Btu and low-ash characteristics."

Rahall warned, however, that in order to continue West Virginia coal's expansion into the growing Southeastern utility market such as in Florida, railroad coal rates must be maintained at reasonable levels, a lid must be slapped on coal imports and other roadblocks to coal use must be avoided."

"If this is accomplished, the future for West Virginia steam coal and those employed in the industry, will be very bright indeed," Rahall said. "This will have a positive effect on the general economy of the state," he added.

Rahall concluded, "This is why I will continue to strongly push my legislative initiatives in these areas during the new Congress."