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CONGRESSMAN

# Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 1987

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## RAHALL COAL IMPORT MEASURE SET FOR HOUSE FLOOR ACTION

Washington, D.C. -- The House Interior Committee today cleared the way for Rep. Nick Rahall's coal import bill to be considered by the full House of Representatives. Rahall's measure, imposing an \$8 per ton tariff on imported coal was included in the Interior Committee's approved version of budget reconciliation legislation.

Rahall hailed the committee action as a major step toward stemming the rising tide of coal imports into the U.S. "In my declared legislative guerilla warfare against imported coal, this action could be the 'Waterloo' for imported coal," Rahall claimed. "I am very, very optimistic about this bill's prospects for passage by the Congress."

Rahall's bill, incorporated as an amendment to the budget reconciliation bill, would impose an \$8 per-ton duty on imported coal that currently enters this country tariff-free. "This is an attempt to counter the unfair advantage foreign coal has over the domestic industry due to the lack of stringent environmental, health and safety safeguards in foreign coal-producing countries," Rahall said. "The rising trend in coal imports into the U.S. is becoming alarming, and I feel that it is time to nip this in the bud before it is too late, as it has been for other industries that have been hammered by imports."

That the U.S. would import any coal at all remains a sticking point with Rahall. "The U.S. importing coal is like Saudi Arabia importing oil," he remarked. "That a coal-rich America imports coal is insane."

Rahall noted that Florida was a particular area of concern to domestic coal producers, particularly West Virginia steam coal producers. A recent study conducted by Rahall indicated that sales of West Virginia steam coal to Florida had declined in 1986 by 78% over the previous year. "I attribute this situation to an increase in foreign coal entering Florida," he said.

Rahall vowed to continue his war on imports, an effort boosted greatly by today's committee action. "When it comes to the interests of my constituents, no battle is too big to fight," he said. "I will continue to seek any opportunity and every vehicle at my disposal to gain a legislative remedy to a most disturbing phenomenon -- importing coal."

Rahall also noted that not only will the miners and producers of coal benefit, the U.S. Treasury will also be the beneficiary of these added revenues.

The reconciliation will now go to the House Budget Committee, from where it will be presented intact to the full House of Representatives for a vote.