

News
From _____

Nick Rahall

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RAHALL INCLUDES SIXTH STREET BRIDGE INSTRUCTIONS IN APPROPRIATIONS MEASURE

Washington, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall was successful in persuading the House Appropriations Transportation subcommittee to include language giving additional priority to Huntington's Sixth Street Bridge in the FY88 appropriations bill being considered in the committee.

Rahall's action means that the appropriations bill reported to the House for consideration will include language directing the Secretary of Transportation to assign high priority in the use of discretionary bridge funds to the Sixth Street Bridge. "This is a very significant step toward the final realization of our goal to replace the dilapidated Sixth Street Bridge," Rahall said. "Whereas all previous assurances I had received in the assignment of priority were in the form of colloquies and oral commitments on the floor of the House, this one will be included in the report language on the appropriations bill."

"Obviously, instructions such as these which appear in writing will carry great weight in the decision-making process of the Secretary of Transportation as to the assignment of discretionary bridge funds," Rahall added.

In a meeting last week with Federal Highway Administration head Ray Barnhart, Rahall and city officials were assured that prospects for the Sixth Street Bridge replacement were excellent -- provided the state proceeded on schedule and submitted the necessary right-of-way and construction plans. "It is incumbent upon the state to submit the necessary plans and applications so that the Department of Transportation can consider Huntington's application and approve the funds," Rahall implored.

During the meeting with Barnhart, both the administrator and Rahall cited the strong local support as a major factor in the chances for replacement of the bridge. Many city officials, including Mayor Robert Nelson and local legislators, as well as Chamber of Commerce representatives and local transportation officials, made their strong support known during the meeting.

"All of these steps I have taken, I feel, will help us toward final approval of this project," Rahall observed. "Replacement of the Sixth Street Bridge is vital to the city of Huntington, and I will pursue any and all avenues to bring about its replacement."

The Sixth Street Bridge has the lowest safety rating of any bridge in the state and has met all federal criteria for discretionary funding.