

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL SAYS PROGRESS BEING MADE ON ARMY CORPS MINERAL LEASE TRANSFER

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) announced today that all mineral leases on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lands within the Ohio River Division have now been transferred to the administration of the Bureau of Land Management, the entity designated with the responsibility for managing federal mineral resources.

Rahall said the BLM has notified him that field inspections of the leases have been completed and their current status determined.

"This action means that from this time forward the BLM will regularly inspect and monitor the oil and gas leases so as to ensure that proper rental and royalty payments are collected and distributed among federal and state accounts," Rahall said. "It is also my understanding that the Corps of Engineers has advised all their districts to transfer to the BLM all mineral leases that may be acquired as part of any future Corps projects."

According to the BLM, there are 283 producing leases in the Corps' Ohio River Division, with 188 located in West Virginia.

Rahall also said the Army Corps of Engineers will report to him next week with information on amounts owed to West Virginia as a result of faulty collection procedures in the past. Both the BLM and Corps reports are being made as a result of Rahall's April Mining Subcommittee hearing on the matter.

"The Corps and BLM are to be commended for their diligence in responding to this situation," Rahall said. "The Corps has been very cooperative in the transfer of management responsibility of these mineral leases."

Rahall added, "While I am looking forward to hearing from the Corps on the amounts it believes are owed to West Virginia due to faulty distribution and accounting procedures in the past, the true figure may never be known because lease monitoring and record keeping were not the best."