

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL RIVER BILL PASSED BY HOUSE

Washington, D.C. -- The U.S. House of Representatives today, in a lopsided vote, passed Rep. Nick Rahall's (D-WV) bill to protect West Virginia Rivers.

Rahall hailed the House action as a victory for the growing recreational and tourism industry in West Virginia. "Passage of this bill sets the stage for the further development of southern West Virginia into one of the premier travel destinations across the country," Rahall said. "We cannot underestimate the economic benefits of the integrated network of river park units envisioned in this bill, the largest in the country. A new era of tourism prosperity is at hand."

H.R. 900, the West Virginia National Interest River Conservation Act of 1987, would establish the Gauley River National Recreation Area, and designate the state's first national wild and scenic rivers on segments of the Meadow, Bluestone and Greenbrier Rivers. The New River Gorge National River would serve as the hub of the system which will include the region's state parks. Access will be enhanced with the completion of I-64 into Beckley and the proposed New River Parkway, which received funding due to Rahall's efforts earlier this year.

During the debate on his bill, which passed by a vote of 344-39, Rahall noted that all recreational activities would be well-served by the bill, including fishing, hiking, camping and whitewater rafting. According to Rahall, H.R. 900 preserves these segments "for the benefit of present and future generations."

"This legislation is the result of many years of negotiations with all interested parties, and the resulting consensus which allowed us to move this bill is a tribute to the work of numerous West Virginians who have contributed to this effort," Rahall noted. "The lopsided vote is indicative of the widespread support this measure enjoys in Congress and I am hopeful that similar action will occur in the Senate."

The bill will now go to the Senate for consideration.

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