

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL SAYS COAL IMPORTS UP 66%; AUSTRALIA FINGERED AS LATEST CULPRIT

Washington, D.C. -- U.S Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) said today that the level of imported coal coming into the United States has increased by over 66% over the last four years. Rahall also predicted that foreign coal will continue to make inroads into the domestic utility industry market if no corrective action is taken as a result of the recent entry of Australian coal in the U.S. market.

"I think that the Australians are getting back at us for snatching the America's Cup away from them by making a concerted effort to capture some of our coal markets," Rep. Rahall observed. "This coal, produced half a world away, has been purchased by two domestic electric utilities so far this year and, apparently, the Australians are joining the Colombians in the effort to displace West Virginia and other Appalachian region coal here in the U.S."

Since the beginning of the year, two electric utility companies -- Central Power and Light in Texas, and Florida Power in Florida -- took delivery of Australian coal. Florida Power late last year also purchased coal produced in western Canada and has a long-term contract for Colombian coal.

Rahall said that his Subcommittee on Mining and Natural Resources will conduct a hearing on March 19 (9:45 am, Room 1324 Longworth House Office Bldg. Washington, D.C.) on several pending bills aimed at stemming the tide of imported coal entering the U.S.

In addition, Rahall noted that action on amendments to the Staggers Rail Act of 1980, which were introduced in Congress last week, seeking to insure that railroad coal rates are maintained at reasonable levels will also work against the use of foreign coal by the domestic utility industry.