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From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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CLEAN WATER ACT APPROVAL APPLAUDED BY RAHALL

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Stating that it could only help West Virginia's communities, U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) today praised the passage of the Clean Water Act by the House of Representatives.

"This legislation is of vital importance to communities throughout this country but especially to the Appalachian region which I represent," Rahall stated in support of the bill. "In West Virginia there are still numerous localities without adequate water facilities. These communities are counting on our assistance to enable them to meet water quality requirements imposed by the federal government."

Rahall was the author of a provision in the bill which will provide incentives for industry to remine and reclaim abandoned coal mine lands thereby reducing environmental damages while at the same time retrieving valuable coal deposits.

"There are many abandoned mines that have high levels of acid in their water run-offs," Rahall commented. "However, there is little incentive for the coal industry to go back into these areas because the operator would be saddled with the responsibility of meeting stringent water quality standards for mistakes made by someone else in the past. My provision says that yes, you would have to fully reclaim the abandoned site after remining but during the mining operation some flexibility on how you meet water quality standards would be allowed."

The Congressman said the passage of the bill in the 99th Congress and the measure's approval by the House in the early days of the 100th Congress indicates that Americans want to clean up their surroundings whether the President supports it or not.

"The President's pocket veto in November was a signal to the people of this nation that he is not concerned about the preservation of our environment," Rahall said. "He let the bill die while Congress was out of session to avoid an override. This time, if the bill is vetoed, I am confident that it will be overridden."

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