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From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL KICKS OFF COAL LEGISLATION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-W.Va.) today kicked-off his legislative program on coal issues for the new Congress by introducing two measures aimed at combatting the infiltration of imported coal into the United States.

"During the 100th Congress, it is my intention to wage a campaign of legislative guerrilla warfare against the threat posed to domestic coal miner jobs by foreign coal entering this country," Rahall said. "I will seek to use every opportunity and every possible vehicle at my disposal to gain a legislative remedy to combat what has to be one of the most insane trends this country has ever witnessed--that of a coal-rich America importing coal from foreign countries."

The Fourth Congressional District Congressman reintroduced legislation to impose an \$8 per ton duty on imported coal premised on the fact this coal currently enters the country tariff free. The bill is an attempt to counter the unfair advantage imported coal has over the domestic industry due to the lack of stringent environmental, health and safety safeguards in foreign coal producing countries.

Rahall's second coal import bill would deny federal coal leases to any company engaged in the production and importation of foreign coal entering the United States.

"I call this my 'fish or cut bait' bill," Rahall said. "It says to those companies who want to produce federal coal but who also want to produce foreign coal and bring it into this country, either 'fish' and be an American coal producer and employ Americans in your mines, or 'cut bait,' the people's coal will not be available to you."

According to Rahall, both measures face strong opposition from certain special interest groups and it will be an uphill battle to gain their enactment.

"When it comes to the interests of my constituents, no battle is too big to fight," Rahall said.

The Congressman added that he will be releasing details on his other coal-related initiatives in the near future.

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