

News
From _____

Nick Rahall

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RAHALL PUSHES MINE SAFETY AT INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS HEARING

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) yesterday appeared before the Subcommittee on Interior Committee on Appropriations and urged increased funding for mine safety. Rahall also recommended the purchase of West Virginia Forest Land for the Monongahela National Forest during the hearing on Fiscal Year 1988 appropriations.

Rahall urged that \$7.25 million be appropriated for the purpose of mining health and safety technology. Included is over \$2 million for research at the Generic Center for Respirable Dust at West Virginia University and Pennsylvania State University.

"Under health and safety technology, of priority importance is the request for the Generic Center for Respirable Dust as well as increased research funding for the design of a smaller, lighter weight, self-contained self-rescuer unit," Rahall testified.

Rahall, Chairman of the Interior Subcommittee on Mining and Natural Resources, also called for \$7 million for the purpose of mining technology which would include \$1.5 million increase for acid mine drainage work.

"For mining technology, we are seeking funds to complete underground proof-of-concept validations on prototype mining devices; research into efforts to treat acid mine drainage and subsidence and an intensified Abandoned Mine Reclamation research program," Rahall stated.

Rahall also endorsed the Committee's recommendations relating to the National Park System. He recalled previous support in which funds were allocated to enable the National Forest Service to undertake the first-phase purchase of the Shavers Fork tract in the Monongahela National Forest.

"For Fiscal Year 1988, I recommend approximately \$12.5 million to complete the acquisition of the Shavers Fork tract," Rahall stated. "There should be no doubt that the purchase of the entire Shavers Fork inholding will protect a most valuable recreational, wildlife and historic resources of national significance."

HIGHLIGHTS OF REP. NICK J. RAHALL's TESTIMONY
FY 88 INTERIOR APPROPRIATION

U.S. BUREAU OF MINES

-- Recommended FY 88 appropriation: \$148,013,000

This is an increase of \$9,851,000 over the FY 87 enacted appropriation and \$29,383,000 over the FY 88 budget request.

Recommended amount over the budget request allocated as follows:

Health and Safety Technology -- +\$7.25 million, including \$2.5 million for the Generic Center for Respirable Dust at West Virginia University and Pennsylvania State University, and increases for research into fire and explosion mitigation, robotic mining techniques, the development of self-contained-self-rescuers, methane drainage and industrial hazards.

Mining Technology -- +\$7 million, including \$1.5 million for proof-of-concept validations, an increase of \$1 million for acid mine drainage work, an increase of \$1 million for subsidence research, and an increase of \$3.5 million for AML Research.

Mineral Institutes -- +\$12.5 million for allotment and research grants.

Minerals and Materials Technology -- +\$1 million over budget request for flame reactor technology.

Mineral Data Analysis -- +\$1.5 million over budget request for Mineral Investigations.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

-- Recommend increase of \$2 million over budget request for the National Mineral Resource Assessment Program.

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE

-- No change from budget request.

BLM - ENERGY and MINERALS MANAGEMENT

-- Recommend increase of \$2 million over budget request for oil shale claim validation activities.

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING ABANDONED MINE RECLAMATION FUND

-- Recommended FY 88 State Reclamation Program Grants: \$150 million, pursuant to the budget request.

-- Recommended FY 88 RAMP: \$15 million.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND -- WEST VIRGINIA

National Forest Service Land Acquisition for the Monongahela National Forest

-- Recommend inclusion of \$12.5 million in land acquisition funds so the Forest Service may make Phase II acquisition of the Shaver's Fork tract in West Virginia.

STATEMENT OF HONORABLE NICK J. RAHALL, II
before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
April 29, 1987

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee on Interior. The Interior Committee's fiscal year 1988 budget recommendations for the Bureau of Mines is \$29.4 million over the Administration's request.

As in the past, I am deeply concerned with the dramatic reductions being proposed in the Bureau of Mines budget for health and safety technology research, mining research and for the Mineral Institutes. Of the amount recommended over the budget request, 25% would be allocated to the Health and Safety Technology program, 24% allocated to the Mining Technology program and 43% to the Mineral Institutes.

Under Health and Safety Technology, of priority importance is the amount suggested over the budget request for the Generic Center for Respirable Dust as well as increased research funding for the design of a smaller, lighter weight, self-contained-self-rescuer unit; fires and explosion suppression systems; robotics; methane drainage; and industrial hazards.

For Mining Technology, we are seeking increased funding to complete underground proof-of-concept validations on prototype mining devices; research into efforts to treat acid mine drainage and subsidence; and an intensified Abandoned Mine Reclamation research program.

Last year, the AML research program was transferred from OSM to the Bureau of Mines. We believe this program should receive a total of \$5.4 million for FY 88 in an effort to obtain a greater return from each dollar spent on the ground under the AML construction grant program. More research into innovative reclamation technologies will ultimately result in better reclamation projects.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the United States is fast approaching a point of no return with respect to mining and minerals education. If we are to wean ourselves from our dependency on foreign and often politically volatile sources of strategic and critical minerals and materials, efforts must be made today to ensure that a body of trained professionals will be available in the future to address this pressing situation.

Last year, this Subcommittee approved funds for research grants under the Mineral Institutes program. I strongly urge you to also include funds for allotment grants as well to the 32 Mineral Institutes. For the Mineral Institutes and generic centers, we are recommending a total of \$12.5 million for FY 88.

The Committee is also recommending small increases for the U.S. Geological Survey and BLM's energy and mineral management activity. I will not go into detail on these matters as they are addressed in my submission, except to say that we are bringing to the House Floor legislation to address the virtual give-away of public oil shale lands and will require some funding to conduct validity determinations on these oil shale claims.

The Committee is not recommending any increases over the budget request for the Minerals Management Service's royalty management program. However, we, as you, are greatly concerned with the Interior Department's continued problems with mineral royalty valuations and collections. The Subcommittee on Mining and Natural Resources held a hearing on this matter yesterday and will conduct another hearing tomorrow. We look forward to working with you to remedy the problems plaguing this program so that the American people will have greater faith in the ability of their government to obtain a proper return on the disposition of public mineral resources.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to take this opportunity to strongly endorse the Committee's recommendations relating to the National Park System and specifically, the historic preservation fund, as well as for those programs funded under the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Last year, you were gracious enough to support the West Virginia Congressional Delegation's request for land acquisition funds so that the National Forest Service could undertake the first-phase purchase of the Shavers Fork tract, a major inholding in the Monongahela National Forest National Forest.

We are deeply appreciative of your assistance in this matter, and for FY 88, we are requesting approximately \$12.5 million to complete this acquisition. There should be no doubt that the purchase of the entire Shavers Fork inholding will protect a most valuable recreational, wildlife and historic resources of national significance.

Thank you.