

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1988

CONTACT: JERRY BURKOT
202-225-3452

RAHALL SAYS TAA AND BLACK LUNG INCLUDED IN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON - The House of Representatives today passed legislation inspired by the West Virginia Delegation, that provides for the transfer of amounts to fund Black Lung benefits and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) called the bill vital to the many West Virginians who rely on Black Lung and T.A.A. for their survival.

Congressman Rahall, along with his W.Va. colleagues in the House, recently introduced legislation to keep TAA funds available to West Virginians. Today's emergency appropriations bill encompasses the West Virginia proposal.

"Unless we in the Congress provide additional funds, approximately 1,200 West Virginians receiving TAA benefits will be without their entitlement for the state will not have any funds to supply those deserving," Rahall said. "To date, the TAA program has been appropriated \$138 million in Fiscal Year 1988. The Department of Labor calculates that an additional \$49 million is required this fiscal year to maintain TAA weekly benefits."

H.R. 5026 also provides much needed funds for the Black Lung program. Without additional, emergency funding, 135,000 beneficiaries may see medical payments withheld and other benefits reduced.

"No funds are currently available to provide retroactive benefits to new claimants entitled such under current law," Rahall said. "The additional \$43 million provided by this bill will maintain Black Lung Benefits for this fiscal year and are sufficient to provide benefits to those entitled."

The measure also provides funding designed to keep unemployment offices from closing, to continue Small Business Administration disaster operations and to increase funding for the Coast Guard.

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.