

CONGRESSMAN

News
From _____

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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HOUSE BILL FUNDS AMTRAK, SAVES E.A.S.

WASHINGTON - The U.S. House of Representatives today passed H.R. 4794, the Fiscal Year 1989 Transportation appropriation bill providing the Department of Transportation and related agencies operating funds for the next fiscal year. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) said the measure included funding of programs vital to West Virginia, including AMTRAK and Essential Air Service (E.A.S.). Rahall and the House voted down an amendment that would have abolished funding for E.A.S.

"I am pleased that yet again the Committee rejected the Reagan Administration's typical short-sighted and misguided attempt to zero out funding for AMTRAK. We in the House have not forgotten those who rely so heavily on the train, many of whom are the elderly and handicapped who have limited means of transportation," Rahall said. "The Cardinal not only supplies an important means of transportation for West Virginians, but also brings people from throughout the country to enjoy the many recreational opportunities in our beautiful state."

Another recipient of funding Rahall said was the Essential Air Program. A total of \$29.1 million has been set aside for E.A.S., a service Rahall said is vital to the further economic development of West Virginia.

"There are five communities in West Virginia whose airports receive E.A.S. assistance. Two of those facilities, Beckley and Bluefield are located in my Congressional district and I can personally attest to the vital need for E.A.S. support in these communities," Rahall stated. "Without its support, air service and further economic diversification would be in jeopardy in Southern West Virginia."

Rahall also said that funding was increased over the administration's request for other mass transit programs including the Urban Mass Transit Administration formula grant program which provides mass transit capital and operating assistance. "Funds for the UMTA are vital to the Tri-State Transit Authority (TTA) in Huntington, which provides a viable means of safe, reliable and inexpensive transportation for the citizens of the Tri-State Area."

In a related matter, Rahall announced that the TTA will receive over \$1 million in UMTA funds this week for operating assistance, transit planning and the purchase of three buses.

Finally, Rahall said H.R. 4794 includes \$13.8 billion for the Federal Highway Administration. The FHWA provides financial assistance to West Virginia and other states to construct and improve roads and highways, and to enforce federal standards in relation to interstate motor carriers and the highway transport of hazardous materials.

The bill passed the House and now goes to the Senate for consideration.