

News
from _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL'S COAL HERITAGE BILL SENT TO WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) announced that shortly prior to the adjournment of the 100th Congress, final approval was given to his West Virginia Coal Heritage legislation. The measure is now waiting for the signature of the President.

"This legislation provides the framework for some exciting developments in our southern counties based on the popularity and attractiveness of our cultural heritage," Rahall said. "It sets forth a plan of action which should lead to the advancement of new recreational and tourism opportunities in southern West Virginia."

Rahall's legislation directs the National Park Service to conduct an intensive one-year feasibility study on preserving significant cultural, historic, and natural resources associated with the coal mining heritage of southern West Virginia. As part of the study, a tour route is to be identified linking the coal heritage sites and points of interest with existing State and Federal parks and recreational facilities.

The eleven counties that are the subject of the study are Cabell, Wayne, Mingo, Logan, McDowell, Wyoming, Raleigh, Mercer, Boone, Fayette and Summers.

"The richest resource in these southern counties are the people," Rahall said. "The preservation of our cultural heritage will be advanced by this legislation for the education and benefit of future generations. At the same time, the region will profit from the development of its Coal Heritage sites. This is what my legislation is all about."

According to Rahall, "The coal mining history of this region is a story of struggle, of human sacrifice and of occurrences which have left their mark on the history of the Nation as a whole." He noted that towns like Matewan and Bramwell are representative of the growing interest to preserve this history.

Rahall said that he sought to facilitate the enactment of his legislation by tacking it onto a larger bill primarily dealing with public lands in the West. The measure passed the House in September and the Senate approved it late Friday night. Noting that all of the other titles of the bill are sponsored by House Republicans, Rahall said that he expects the President to sign it into law.

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