

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 1, 1989

CONTACT: JIM ZOIA
(202) 226-7761

RAHALL REELECTED AS MINING SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN Jurisdiction Expanded To Address Federal Surface Mining Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Democrats on the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs today reelected U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) to chair the Subcommittee on Mining and Natural Resources. At the same time, the Committee's rules were changed to grant the Rahall Subcommittee greater jurisdiction over matters involving the landmark 1977 federal surface mining act.

"I am honored by this vote of confidence by the Democratic Caucus of the Interior Committee in my leadership on mining issues pending before the Congress," Rahall said. "I will continue to work hard to merit my colleagues' bestowment of these additional responsibilities upon me."

At the beginning of each new Congress, all subcommittee chairmen must be reelected. Rahall was first elected as chairman of the Mining and Natural Resources in 1985 at the start of the 99th Congress and was reelected to that position in 1987 for the 100th Congress. Today's action by the Democratic Caucus will be ratified by the full Committee next week.

Rahall will preside over a subcommittee with expanded powers than it had in the past. Interior Committee Chairman Morris Udall, known as the 'father' of the 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, had always retained oversight and legislative jurisdiction over it. At the start of the last Congress, however, Udall granted Rahall's subcommittee with oversight responsibilities for the Abandoned Mine Reclamation program.

Today, Rahall's colleagues approved a committee rule change approved by Udall which gives the West Virginia congressman's subcommittee authority over all oversight and legislative matters pertaining to the Abandoned Mine Reclamation program, legislation involving remining initiatives and oversight responsibility for the federal surface mining regulation and enforcement program.

MORE

343 CANNON H.O.B. WASHINGTON, DC 20515

"The stage is now set for my efforts to reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation program and to address other pressing issues facing coalfield residents in West Virginia and across the Nation involving the regulation of surface coal mining," Rahall stated. "I intend to delve deeply into these matters and to thoroughly investigate the Office of Surface Mining's performance in carrying out its statutory mandate."

Rahall said that he will schedule hearings to examine mine reclamation and bonding practices, the abandoned mine reclamation program and coal remining incentives in the near future. He also announced that the Subcommittee will conduct a February 9, 1989, oversight hearing on the Office of Surface Mining's fiscal year 1990 budget request.

The Office of Surface Mining now joins the other federal agencies whose budgets fall under Rahall's jurisdiction. These agencies are the Bureau of Mines, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Minerals Management Service and the energy and minerals management programs of the Bureau of Land Management. Rahall has scheduled a February 2, 1989, hearing to examine their budget proposals.