

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 4, 1989

CONTACT: JERRY BURKOT
(202) 225-3452

RAHALL BEGINS ANEW LEGISLATIVE EFFORT AGAINST IMPORTED COAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today reintroduced two measures aimed at mitigating the trend of increased U.S. import levels of foreign coal.

"These coal imports represent a tumor on the energy security of this Nation," Rahall stated in his House Floor remarks. "This tumor can only be diagnosed as being malignant; growing and spreading throughout the electric utility markets of the Gulf and southeastern states with foreign coal even penetrating the northeastern region as well."

The first measure would simply impose an \$8 per ton duty on imported coal. No tariff is currently collected on these imports. The purpose of the duty is to offset the competitive advantage foreign producers have as a result of not having to meet environmental, health, welfare and safety requirements of the kind imposed on U.S. coal producers.

The second measure seeks to address one of the factors which have been an essential element in the establishment of new mining operations in both Colombia and Venezuela: the financial and technical expertise of U.S. mining entities. In this regard, the legislation would prohibit the issuance of new federal coal leases to any entity which is involved in the production and importation into the U.S. of foreign coal.

"From a public policy standpoint, I see no reason why the people of this country should award these companies with public coal resources when these very same entities are responsible for robbing other producers, such as those in my State of West Virginia, of market opportunities," Rahall said.

Rahall noted that only last month it was announced that Venezuelan coal will be delivered to distribution facilities in Camden, New Jersey, for use by utility and industrial customers. This announcement followed on the heels of the delivery of about 100,000 tons of Colombian coal to Camden during 1988.

"Frankly, as a native of the rich coalfields of southern West Virginia, I never thought that I would live to see the day when the United States would begin to walk down the path of foreign coal dependency," Rahall said.