

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 8, 1989

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RAHALL SAYS WV ELIGIBLE FOR \$20.6 MILLION IN AML FUNDS

BECKLEY, WV -- West Virginia is eligible to receive \$20.6 million in abandoned mine reclamation funds for the current fiscal year, U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) announced today.

"Jobs and a cleaner coalfield environment are what this program is all about," Rahall said. "This funding is intended to be used to mitigate the various threats posed to coalfield residents by abandoned coal mines. Not only does this improve our environment but it provides employment opportunities as well."

The Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program was authorized by Congress as part of the 1977 federal surface mining law and funds are appropriated by Congress on an annual basis. The Office of Surface Mining (OSM) then determines how much each state is eligible to receive. While West Virginia's allocation is \$20.6 million, the funds will not actually be released until the State gains OSM approval of the reclamation projects it intends to undertake with the money.

Rahall said it is his understanding that the State has submitted enough projects to utilize the allocation and the list is in its final OSM review stages. He noted that once approval is received, it is the State's responsibility to contract for the actual reclamation work.

"My job is to get the funds appropriated. It is now incumbent upon the State to spend them, and in this regard I will continue to advocate the timely obligation of these monies for the benefit of the people of West Virginia," Rahall said.

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