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RAHALL SPEAKS UP FOR MATEWAN FLOOD PROJECT

Washington - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) today issued his strong and unwavering support for the Mate Creek Project in Mingo County. The development project, contiguous to downtown Matewan, would elevate the area above the flood plain of the Tug Fork River to provide flood protection for residents and businesses.

Rahall hopes to work with officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Town of Matewan to save the project from the Corps cutting board. The Corps is now in the process of determining whether or not to continue with the Mate Creek project.

"I am going to meet tomorrow morning with Colonel Thomas E. Farewell of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Huntington District to discuss the situation in Matewan," Rahall said. "I hope that we can work toward an agreement in which the people of Matewan are given the protection they desperately need from the ravaging waters of the Tug River. The memories and harsh realities of 1977 and 1984 are present in the minds of every Matewan citizen who lived through those horrible floods. This project would help provide protection against such natural disasters.

The Mate Creek Project would entail the moving of existing homes and businesses in the proposed project area, and raising the level of the ground with earthen fill. The structures would then be rebuilt on the new, higher land.

Rahall adds that without the Mate Creek Project, the economic development and diversification efforts in the town will be dealt a crippling blow.

"Without this project, property for development for Matewan's expansion will become more scarce," Rahall said. "It will be difficult to find suitable land that is not classified as part of the 100 year flood plain. It is my hope that we can give the town a shot of adrenelin by reaching an agreement to go forth with the Mate Creek Project."

Rahall plans to meet with Matewan Mayor Johnny Fullen next Friday as he visits Mingo County.