

**ABANDONED MINE RECLAMATION FUNDS APPROVED**  
***Rahall Initiatives To Address Coalfield Hazards Move Forward***

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Abandoned coal mine land reclamation efforts will get a big boost under an \$150 million appropriation approved by a House subcommittee this week, U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) said today. The amount is \$30 million more than requested by the Administration in its fiscal year 1990 budget submission.

"We in the House of Representatives are seeking to respond to the dilemma faced by coalfield residents who are threatened by health, safety and environmental hazards associated with abandoned coal mine lands," Rahall said. "This appropriation represents a renewed commitment to safeguard these citizens and restore the environmental integrity of our land."

Rahall said that the House Subcommittee on Interior, of the Appropriations Committee, has been responsive to his requests and testimony in support of adequate funding levels for the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program. Earlier this year, Rahall's Mining Subcommittee had recommended increased budget authority over the \$120 million Administration request for abandoned mine reclamation grants to the states.

Also approved were Rahall requests for \$2.5 million for the Respirable Dust Center at West Virginia University and \$1.5 million for the University's National Mine Land Reclamation Center. The Administration had not requested any funding for these programs.

"As part of our effort to reduce the incidence of black lung disease, West Virginia University has embarked on a major research program on respirable dust that is sure to have some practical applications in the near future," Rahall said. "Meanwhile, through the National Mine Land Reclamation Center, we are seeking to gain improved reclamation technologies to address such pressing issues as acid mine drainage and subsidence."

Rahall noted that the appropriation bill would also make \$100,000 available in start-up funding for the new Gauley River National Recreation Area, established as part of his West Virginia Rivers Bill enacted late last year.