

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ACTING PRESS SECRETARY

MONDAY, JULY 3, 1989

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RAHALL PROPOSES HUNTINGTON, CHARLESTON, POINT PLEASANT ROUTE FOR METRO VALLEY EXPRESSWAY

WASHINGTON, DC -- U. S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II (D-W.Va.) recently contacted Governor Gaston Caperton, urging him to support the construction of a proposed expressway along Route 2 connecting Huntington, Charleston, and Point Pleasant. Although two other routes are under consideration, Rahall has announced his support for this one because it would have "a greater positive impact on a larger area of West Virginia than either alternative."

The Metro Valley area of West Virginia, spanning the hills and plains between Charleston and Huntington, is ripe for economic development. Rahall stressed that eighty percent of the land in West Virginia with a slope of thirty percent or less and which is available for large scale industrial development is in the Metro Valley region. "If this area is to realize its economic potential, it must be served not only by the river and the railroad, but also by a divided highway," Rahall said.

In his letter to the Governor, Rahall indicated that industry would be interested in settling in the Metro Valley if the area were accessible by a divided highway. Rahall stressed that the Huntington, Charleston, Point Pleasant route would be the single most effective way to "open up the rich and largely undeveloped land of Metro Valley to economic growth."

Rahall's interest in promoting tourism as a major West Virginia industry was also an important consideration in selecting the most appropriate route for the expressway. The various historic and natural attractions throughout Metro Valley have the potential to attract large crowds once the area is served by a better highway. According to Rahall, the Huntington, Charleston, Point Pleasant route "will provide that essential ingredient" to the majority of the area's sites.

"The future of southern West Virginia depends in large part on harnessing the great potential of Metro Valley. By selecting this route for the expressway, we can channel the area's assets into tangible benefits for the entire state. I would encourage the Governor to carefully consider the Huntington, Charleston, Point Pleasant route," Rahall said.

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 27, 1989

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The Honorable Gaston Caperton, III
Governor
State of West Virginia
State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Governor Caperton:

I am writing to you today on a matter of immense importance to Cabell County and the City of Huntington, the proposed expressway linking Point Pleasant to I-64 at Milton.

This route would have the greatest positive impact on a larger area of West Virginia than either alternative plan under consideration: building the road down US 62 and east to I-77 at Kenna, or down US 35 to Winfield and connecting to I-64 between Scott Depot and St. Albans. The construction of such a highway along Route 2, which already has a Department of Highways functional classification as a four-lane route, will open up the rich and largely undeveloped land of the Ohio Valley in Mason and Cabell counties for economic growth. Eighty percent of the land in West Virginia with a slope of thirty degrees or less and available for a large-scale industrial development is in this region, an area that must, if it is to realize its economic potential, be served by not only the river and railroad, but also by a divided highway. I am enclosing some information I have requested from Marshall University, focusing on the impact of the proposed route on this area.

This route would enhance our efforts to attract the Alabama Pulp and Paper plant to this area, as well as satellite distribution and production facilities for other industries located in metropolitan centers in Kentucky and Ohio. The Ohio Valley in Mason and Cabell counties would be a most attractive site to all of these industries, if it were accessed by a divided, four-lane highway.

Additionally, I, as you, have worked diligently for the expansion of the tourism trade in our state. This area has significant tourism potential with a variety of historic and natural attractions in Point Pleasant, Huntington, and the entire area between the two. For example, the Corps of Engineers' and Departments of Natural Resources' and Culture and History's development of the historic Jenkins House and the Greenbottom Wildlife Mitigation Site will be a major recreational location in the region. However, an integral element of a successful tourism and recreation industry is accessibility, and only an expressway down Route 2 and across northern Cabell county to Milton will provide that essential ingredient.

The Honorable Gaston Caperton, III

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For all these reasons, this project has my full support. I am happy to assist you in any way I can to successfully complete this needed investment in the infrastructure of this region.

Please do not hesitate to call on me if I can be of service to you and the people of West Virginia.

With ~~warmest~~ personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Nick J. Rahall, II", written in a cursive style.

NICK J. RAHALL, II
Member of Congress

NJR/rsw

Enclosures

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE

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RAHALL URGES SUPPORT FOR POINT PLEASANT HIGHWAY ALONG ROUTE 2 TO MILTON
WASHINGTON, DC -- Nick J. Rahall, II (D-WV) today contacted Governor
Gaston Caperton, urging him to support construction of the the proposed
four-lane highway along current Route 2, which would connect Point
Pleasant to I-64 near Milton.

"The construction of such a highway along Route 2, which already has
a Department of Highways functional classification as a four-lane route,
will open up the rich and largely undeveloped land of the Ohio Valley in
Mason and Cabell Counties for economic growth," Rahall said. "Eighty
percent of the land in West Virginia with a slope of thirty degrees or
less and available for large-scale industrial development is found in
this region, and that area must, if it is to realize its economic potential,
be served by not only the river and railroad, but also by a divided
highway."

Rahall sees the Goodyear and (new plant at site of old Stafford plant,
the name of which I must still ascertain) plants already located in this
area, as well as the Alabama Pulp and Paper Company which is considering
a site in the Ohio valley along Route 2, as examples of the potential of
economic development in the region. However, he believes that this
development can only occur at its highest levels if the area is accessed
by a four-lane highway.

Rahall also said in his letter to the Governor, "Additionally, I,
as you, have worked diligently for the expansion of the tourism trade in
our state. This area has significant tourism potential with a variety of
historic and natural attractions in Point Pleasant, Huntington, and the
entire area between the two. However, an integral element of a
successful tourism and recreation industry is accessibility, and only an
expressway down Route 2 and across northern Cabell County to Milton will
provide that essential ingredient."

Officials study expanding U.S. 35 stretch to 4 lanes

By TOM D. MELLER
Chief correspondent

POINT PLEASANT, W. Va. — Every day, 7,500 vehicles rush up or down the Kanawha River along a 55-mile, two-lane stretch of U.S. 35 between Point Pleasant and St. Albans.

One out of every five is a truck. The West Virginia Department of Highways did the official traffic counts, but Beckie Stein, president of the Mason County Area Chamber of Commerce, makes her own count "each time I drive to Charleston."

"And on the 34 miles from here to Route 34 at Winfield, I count 60 to 90 trucks passing me," she said.

Congress has appropriated \$200,000 for a feasibility study to determine the best way to make it a four-lane expressway.

"Normally, where there is an average daily traffic (ADT) count of 4,000 to 6,000 vehicles, it is time to consider converting a two-lane road to four lanes," said Paul Wilkinson, director of planning for the West Virginia Department of Highways. "Anything over 6,000 usually is automatic."

Rep. Bob Wise, D-W.Va., got the appropriation in this year's federal highway budget and wants a recommendation by the end of the year.

"We hope to have the first phase done by mid-August so we can schedule another public meeting in Mason County," said Fred Vankirk, acting commissioner of the West Virginia DOH.

At that point, the agency will pin down the preferred corridor, according to Vankirk, from the three possibilities now under consideration.

He said the three options, all starting at the Ohio River Bridge here, are:

- Along the Kanawha River to Interstate 64 either along the present U.S. 35 or West Virginia 62 on the other side of the river.

- A southern corridor along West Virginia 2 to a point near the Mason-Cabell County line and cross country to I-64 in the Ona-Milton-Hurricane area.

- An eastern route along West Virginia 62 to a point near the Mason-Putnam County line and then cross country to Interstate 77 near

the Kenna interchange in Jackson County.

Once the corridor is selected, the second phase of the study can begin, Vankirk said.

"This will pin down the actual line we recommend for the road," he said.

Edi Armstrong, press secretary to Wise, said Ohio congressmen are now interested in making U.S. 35 a four-lane road from Dayton, Ohio, to Charleston as a result of meetings May 9 here and in Gallipolis.

The present alignment of U.S. 35 is one of the options, according to Wilkinson. But that idea isn't popular with farmers living along the road who fear the extra 60 feet to 100 feet needed to enlarge the highway will do serious damage to their livelihood.

More than 300 people jammed the Mason County Courthouse at a public meeting here April 26 to convey that message.

"Since our studies show 20 percent of the traffic is trucks, we must determine a plan that will enable

Please see **ROUTE 35/62**

them to travel that distance in similar time and at similar cost," Wilkinson said. "Otherwise, they won't use the new route and we would not accomplish our purpose."

The corridor along the Kanawha River most likely would use West Virginia 34 from Winfield to I-64, but "that causes problems because of the ever-increasing traffic conges-

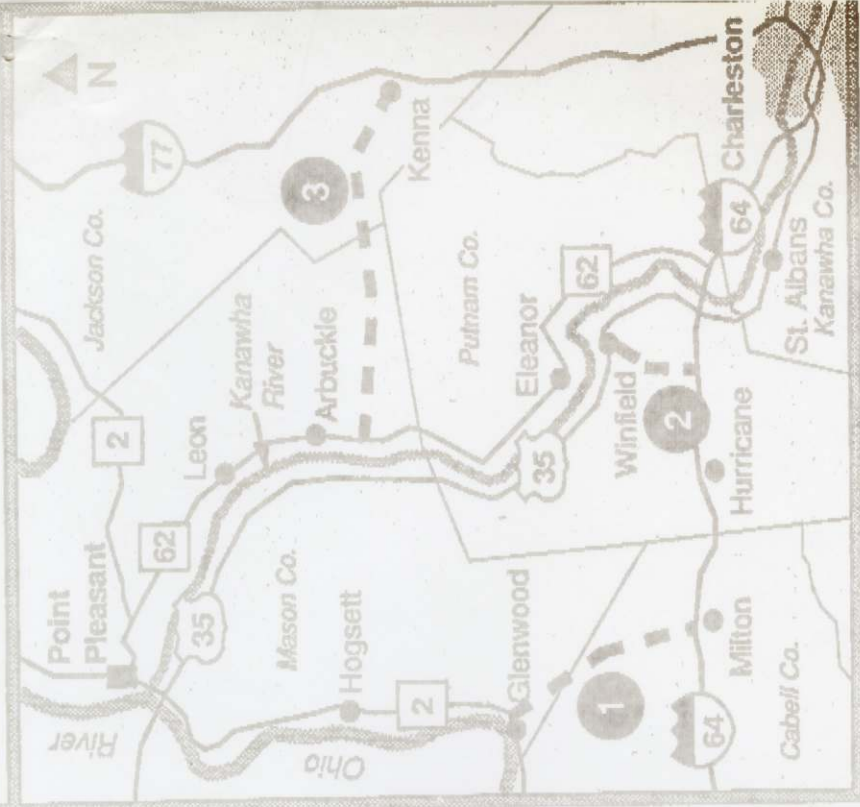
tion at the interchange there," Wilkinson said.

Regardless of the choice, most people will be unhappy, so the DOH is in a no-win situation, he said. But Mason County enjoys a "no-lose situation."

"We will support the recommendation whatever the route," Ms. Stein said, "because we know it will start here."

U.S. 35 study

Dashed lines at sites 1, 2 and 3 show possible routes being considered by the West Virginia Department of Highways.



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