

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 12, 1989

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**INTERIOR FUNDING MEASURE PASSES HOUSE
HOST OF RAHALL SUPPORTED W.VA. PROGRAMS INCLUDED**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A whole host of measures from mine health and safety and environmental protection in West Virginia's coalfields to developing national park units and operating fisheries in the State were given the green light as part of the fiscal year 1990 Interior Appropriation bill passed by the House of Representatives today, U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) announced.

"For those of us representing natural resource dependent regions of the country this is an extremely important appropriation measure," Rahall stated on the House Floor. "Funding under this bill will assist our struggle to preserve our natural resources in West Virginia so that we in the Appalachian Region may seek a better future."

Approved as part of the appropriation legislation was \$150 million to the states under the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program. West Virginia is one of the highest annual recipients of these funds which are used to mitigate health, safety and environmental hazards associated with abandoned coal mine lands. The amount approved by the House is \$30 million more than the Administration's request.

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The legislation also makes funding available for a number of Bureau of Mines initiatives recommended by Rahall's Subcommittee on Mining and Natural Resources earlier this year. Included are increased funding for the mine, health and safety technology program in areas involving the mitigation of respirable dust, noise, methane, fires and explosions in underground coal mines. The bill also provides for greater resources to be directed toward land subsidence and acid mine drainage problems which afflict the coalfields. Specifically earmarked by the appropriation measure are:

- * \$2.5 million for the Respirable Dust Center at West Virginia University, which engages in research to reduce the incidence and severity of black lung disease.

- * \$1.5 million for the National Mine Land Reclamation Center at West Virginia University, which seeks new and improved methods to reclaim abandoned coal mine lands.

As part of the U.S. Geological Survey's budget, the bill appropriates funds to continue the low-sulfur coal availability program in West Virginia and other areas of the Appalachian Region. Rahall said that gaining a better understanding of the extent of low-sulfur coal reserves in West Virginia is especially important in light of Congressional consideration of acid rain control legislation.

In the parks area, Rahall said the legislation will provide \$175,000 in management funding for two newly established units of the National Park System in southern West Virginia: the Gauley River National Recreation Area and the Bluestone National Scenic River. These park units were designated by Rahall's West Virginia Rivers Bill enacted late last year.

Rahall also said that West Virginia will benefit from the bill's appropriations for the operation of federal fish hatcheries in the State.