



U.S. Congressman

Nick Rahall

WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATUS OF RAHALL INITIATIVES End of 1st Session of 103rd Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A number of Rahall initiatives were acted upon this year during the first session of the Congress. The House of Representatives adjourned Friday until next January.

The House approved the following Rahall initiatives this year with Senate action expected next year:

"WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS CONSERVATION ACT OF 1993"

The bill would, among other things, establish the Upper New National Scenic River on the 14.5 mile segment of the New River that runs from the West Virginia/Virginia State line downstream to the Bluestone Lake in Summers County. The legislation is intended to preclude the approval of a right-of-way across this river segment for the proposed APCO 765 kv powerline. The House approved the measure on November 23rd.

"INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT"

The bill makes a number of amendments to the last major federal highway bill, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). Included in the measure is a provision to reaffirm the routing of the proposed Transamerica (or I-66) Highway Corridor through southern West Virginia, and a provision to facilitate the construction of the proposed New River Parkway by clarifying that it be built along the West side of the river. The House approved Rahall's bill, H.R. 3276, on November 8th.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION ACT AUTHORIZATION

This Act provides the Secretary of Transportation with the regulatory and enforcement authority to protect the Nation against the risk to life and property that is inherent in the transportation of hazardous materials. Each year, over 4 billion tons of hazardous materials are moved by motor carriers, railroads and other transportation modes.

Besides reauthorizing the Act through fiscal year 1997, Rahall's bill creates a Federal grant program to train fire fighters to respond to hazardous materials accidents and incidents. In addition, the bill establishes another grant program for training employees in the motor carrier, railroad, airline and maritime industries who are engaged in the loading, unloading, handling, storage and transportation of hazardous materials and emergency response. Furthermore, the bill contains a provision requiring the Department of Transportation to reconsider a rule that would prohibit, after October 1, 1996, the use of fiber drums to transport liquid hazardous materials. The issue was brought to Rahall's attention by the employees of Sonoco Products Company in Culloden, who fear they may lose their jobs. The House approved Rahall's bill, H.R. 2178, on November 21st.

REFORM OF THE MINING LAW OF 1872

The Mining Law of 1872 still allows minerals such as gold and silver to be mined from Federal lands owned by all Americans for free. Each year, about \$1.8 billion worth of public minerals are produced in this manner. The law also allows these public mineral lands to be sold for \$2.50 an acre. The Rahall bill would require the payment of an 8% production royalty, and would halt the practice of transferring title to these federal lands at fire sale prices. The House approved Rahall's bill, H.R. 322, by a vote of 316 to 108 on November 18th.

The following Rahall initiatives were enacted into law this year during the first session of the 103rd Congress:

SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA WASTEWATER TREATMENT AND WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

Congress appropriated \$3.5 million to fund the Southern West Virginia Environmental Restoration Infrastructure and Resource Protection Development Pilot Program. Under the program, which was authorized by Rahall legislation in 1992, appropriated funds will be used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to undertake design and construction assistance for publicly owned projects like wastewater treatment and water supply facilities under local cooperation agreements with non-Federal entities such as a county commission. The West Virginia project is one of two authorized Nationwide.

BLUESTONE TRASH CLEAN UP

Congress appropriated \$1 million to force the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to comply with a Rahall sponsored law prohibiting the release of accumulated drift and debris into waters downstream of the Bluestone Dam. Instead, the Corps is directed to undertake measures to prevent the accumulation of drift and debris behind the Dam or to collect and remove accumulated drift and debris rather than passing it through the Dam.

VIRGINIA POINT STUDY

At Rahall's request, Congress appropriated \$500,000 for an additional area of study under the West Virginia Comprehensive Study of the Ohio River Basin to examine the feasibility of undertaking improvements to flood-control projects as well as economic enhancement and recreation development opportunities, such as developing riverfront projects, including Virginia Point in Wayne County.



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