



U.S. Congressman

**Nick Rahall***WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JUNE 27, 1994CONTACT: JIM ZOIA  
(202) 225-9989**RAHALL'S COAL HERITAGE BILL SUBJECT OF HOUSE HEARING**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- West Virginia Division of Culture and History Commissioner Bill Drennen and the Director of Bluefield's Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Dr. Stuart McGehee, are scheduled to testify before a Tuesday hearing on the "West Virginia National Coal Heritage Area Act of 1994," U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) announced today.

The hearing will be conducted by the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands which is considering Rahall's bill to establish a National Coal Heritage Area in southern West Virginia. Rahall is a Subcommittee member.

"The coal mining history of southern West Virginia is a story of struggle, of human sacrifice and of occurrences which have left their mark on the history of the Nation as a whole," Rahall noted. "This legislation is aimed at salvaging remnants of this past and as such, preserving this unique heritage. In my view, this must be done not only for educational purposes, but for the potential regional economic benefits this type of historic preservation may hold."

According to Dr. McGehee: "It is long overdue that Appalachian coal heritage be recognized and commemorated for its crucial role in the creation of modern America." He added: "We must act quickly now while the last generation of men who loaded coal by hand, drove mine mules, and stoked locomotive boilers are still alive. Their memories and culture are threatened by the passage of time and the inevitability of change."

The Rahall legislation proposes to carry out the recommendations of a recently completed study by the National Park Service entitled *A Coal Mining Heritage Study: Southern West Virginia*.

Under the bill, the Secretary of the Interior would be authorized to enter into an agreement with the Governor of the State of West Virginia, acting through the Division of Culture and History and the Division of Tourism and Parks, through which Federal assistance would be provided for a number of heritage preservation initiatives.

Aside from the establishment of the heritage area, Rahall's bill would also provide for a study on the feasibility of establishing a Miners' March National Historic Trail along the route traveled by the participants in what became known as the Battle of Blair Mountain.

Blair Mountain is the site of a major episode in labor and American history. In 1921, 10,000 miners confronted federal troops, state troopers, county deputies, coal operators and Baldwin Felts detective agents there in the aftermath of the slaying of Sid Hatfield and Ed Chambers on the steps of the McDowell County Courthouse. Hatfield and Chambers were to be tried for their role in the Matewan Massacre the previous year.

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**U.S. REP. NICK J. RAHALL**  
**Chairman, Subcommittee on Surface Transportation**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
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**INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT**  
**NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM**  
**AND WEST VIRGINIA**

**National Highway System**

- \* With the completion of the Interstate Highway System, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991--known as ISTEA--established a new National Highway System (NHS) to focus federal resources on roads that are essential to interstate travel and international commerce.
- \* The NHS is to be composed of Interstate and Defense Highway System, certain principal arterial routes, connectors to intermodal facilities and military installations, and the High-Priority Corridors identified by Congress in ISTEA.
- \* The NHS is a major federal funding category that replaces the former Interstate Construction category among others.
- \* ISTEA authorized the NHS but actual route designation is subject to Congressional approval. All of the States submitted candidate routes to the U.S. Department of Transportation which transmitted a recommended system to the Congress during December 1993. On May 25, 1994, the House of Representatives approved Rep. Rahall's bill to designate the NHS.
- \* West Virginia's share of NHS funds is about \$42 million per year subject to a 20% State match for a total of \$50 million per year. These funds may be used for construction, rehabilitation, restoration, resurfacing and reconstruction projects on highways and roads that will be on the State's 1,742-mile system.

**High Priority Corridors on the National Highway System**

- \* ISTEA identified 21 High Priority Corridors that are to be part of the NHS. The purpose of the corridors are to fill in gaps in the existing Interstate Highway System.
- \* Among the corridors are the I-73/74 NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR (Charleston, South Carolina, through Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to Portsmouth, Ohio, to Cincinnati, Ohio, and Detroit, Michigan); and the EAST-WEST TRANSAMERICA CORRIDOR, also known as I-66.

### **High Priority Corridors (continued)**

- \* ISTEА authorized \$8 million per year in Federal funds for the purpose of conducting corridor feasibility studies. Except for the High Priority Segments identified by Congress on the High Priority Corridors, there is no other separate funding category for them. However, States may use NHS funds or other Federal funds available to them, for corridor projects.

### **High Priority Segments of High Priority Corridors**

- \* ISTEА listed 29 specific High Priority Segments nationwide on certain High Priority Corridors.
- \* The segments have the effect of locking-in the route of a given High Priority Corridor and providing for an additional amount of Federal funds for them that is not subject to further appropriation and is above and beyond the apportionment of Federal funds to the States under the Federal highway program.
- \* ISTEА listed three High Priority Segments on the I-73 Corridor, all of which are in West Virginia: (1) the Huntington to Williamson TOLSIА HIGHWAY portion of Route 52; (2) the ROUTE 52 REPLACEMENT segment between Williamson and I-77; and (3) the SHAWNEE PARKWAY segment from the Route 52 replacement segment in the vicinity of the Wyoming-McDowell-Mercer junction to I-77. In ISTEА, Rep. Rahall provided these segments with \$118.5 million in Federal funds.
- \* The West Virginia Division of Highways is currently using this money to conduct feasibility, environmental and preliminary engineering work to support the segments.

### **Coalfields Expressway and the Transamerica Corridor**

- \* In ISTEА, Rep. Rahall included an authorization for the segment of the COALFIELDS EXPRESSWAY (also known as Beckley to Grundy) between Beckley and the West Virginia-Virginia State Line. ISTEА also specifically provided the project with \$50 million to get it started.
- \* The NHS designating legislation recently passed by the House of Representatives includes \$5 million to study the feasibility of extending the project into Virginia.
- \* With respect to the TRANSAMERICA HIGH-PRIORITY CORRIDOR (I-66), during the consideration of the legislation that was to become ISTEА, Rep. Rahall established Congressional intent that the Corridor would enter West Virginia in the vicinity of Williamson and share the I-73/74 Corridor route to the vicinity of Welch, from which point the Transamerica would extend through Wyoming County to Beckley following the route of the proposed Coalfields Expressway.



### **Coalfields/Transamerica (continued)**

- \* In 1993, the House of Representatives passed legislation that would reaffirm this Congressional intent in statute. Rep. Rahall included this provision in the NHS designating legislation that was recently passed by the House.
- \* The NHS designating legislation also includes a provision providing for a study to determine the feasibility of utilizing the I-64 corridor out of Beckley into Virginia as part of the Transamerica Corridor.

### **New River Parkway**

- \* In the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987, Rep. Rahall included a total of \$17.6 million for the New River Parkway.
- \* The 10-mile 'northern segment' of the New River Parkway is located in Raleigh County and would stretch between the Sandstone Interchange of Interstate 64 and the Hinton Bypass. The majority of the project is located within a unit of the National Park System, the New River Gorge National River.
- \* Under the auspices of the New River Parkway Authority, and the West Virginia Division of Highways, preliminary engineering work has been completed for the project. Environmental compliance work is also close to completion.
- \* As part of the NHS designating legislation recently passed by the Congress, Rep. Rahall included an additional \$14.4 million in Federal funds to insure the construction of the project.

### **Major ISTEA Funds In Addition to the NHS**

- \* Interstate Maintenance -- These are projects to rehabilitate, restore and resurface the Interstate System, as well as for reconstruction projects under certain circumstances. West Virginia annually receives about \$22,315,000 in this category.
- \* Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program -- Under this program, Federal funds may be used for the replacement or rehabilitation of any bridge on a public road. West Virginia annually receives about \$58,500,000 under this category.
- \* Surface Transportation Program -- Authorized by ISTEA, this is a block-grant type program that may be used by the States for any roads (including NHS) that are not functionally classified as local or rural minor collectors. Under this program, Federal funds are authorized for construction, rehabilitation, restoration, resurfacing and reconstruction projects. West Virginia annually receives about \$32,500,000 in this category.

## **West Virginia's NHS**

### *Interstate Highway System*

Interstate 77; Interstate 79; Interstate 64; Interstate 81 (eastern panhandle); Interstate 70 (northern panhandle); Interstate 470 (northern panhandle); Interstate 68 (north-central).

### *Appalachian Corridors*

Corridor G (U.S. Route 119 between Charleston and Williamson); Corridor L (U.S. Route 19 between I-79 and I-77); Corridor H (segments of US Route 33 (east of I-79) US Route 219, WV Route 93 and WV Route 55); Corridor D (US Route 50 between Clarksburg and Parkersburg); Corridor Q (US Route 460).

### *High-Priority Corridor Designated by Congress*

I-73 High Priority Corridor (US Route 52 between Huntington and Bluefield, includes the TOLSIA Highway and the 'common ground' corridor with the Shawnee Parkway); the Shawnee Parkway; and the Coalfields Expressway segment that serves as West Virginia's route for the proposed Transamerica (I-66) Corridor.

### *Principal Arterial Routes*

US Route 219; US Route 35; US Route 220/WV Route 93 (eastern panhandle); US Route 522 (eastern panhandle); US Route 340 (eastern panhandle); WV Route 2; WV Route 9 (eastern panhandle).



## POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

### 1. Health Care

First let me say that there are 91,000 people in West Virginia's 3rd district who do not have health care and 271,000 state wide. This is a major concern of mine. It is my opinion that every American is entitled to affordable health care. In our state, it is important that West Virginians have access to health care. Before a health care bill will get my support it will have to have two aspects, high accessibility and affordability.

#### I. Health Care and Abortion

Currently all the bills that have been reported in the House and the Senate contained funding for abortion. However, there are some other amendments and compromises being considered which do not.

I oppose federally funded abortions. I wrote Speaker Foley and told him that if abortion funding was in the health reform bill I would consider voting against that bill.

#### II. Health Care - The Medi-Savings Plan.

It is not a viable alternative to a bill that covers virtually everyone.

I think all Americans are entitled to affordable health care. Medi-Savings would leave many Americans without health care. It would not provide health care for those who need it most, the elderly, young and unemployed.

### 2. Crime

I could not support the recent crime bill because it was not a direct attack on the cause of crime, the criminal.

The crime bill that I supported included, mandatory sentencing for crimes committed with guns, mandatory registration for all sexual predators, \$12 billion for prisons and another \$12 billion for local law enforcement agencies.

### 3. The Economy in West Virginia

The economy in West Virginia is getting better. From August of 1993 to August of this year West Virginia experienced a growth of 3.4 percent, in other words 22,100 new jobs. The unemployment rate in the 3rd district is now down to 11.7 percent which is a remarkable improvement from 13.4 percent in July of 1993.

--and-or--

There are many areas in West Virginia which have applied to become what is called federal empowerment zones and enterprise communities. If these areas are granted this status they will be eligible for:

- a. 20% wage credit for employers on the first \$15,000.
- b. \$37,500 credit for equipment for the first year.
- c. Tax exempt status in the areas for financing.

These programs should provide additional growth to our growing economy.

### 4. Taxes/ Budget Deficit

Since President Clinton came into office the only people who have had an increase in taxes are those who make over \$110,000 a year, in other words only 4,400 of the 1.8 million West Virginians paid higher taxes. 38,000 individuals in the 3rd district saw their taxes decrease because of the increase in the EITC.

### 5. Black Lung

I recently co-sponsored a bill on BLACK LUNG REFORM which passed the house. If this bill is enacted it will:

\* PROVIDE THAT REPAYMENT OF BENEFITS PAID ON AN INITIALLY APPROVED CLAIM WOULD NOT BE REQUIRED IF THE CLAIM IS ULTIMATELY DENIED, UNLESS FRAUD OF DECEPTION WAS USED TO OBTAIN THE PAYMENT.

\* LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF QUALIFYING EVIDENCE A CLAIMANT COULD BE MADE TO PRODUCE TO SUPPORT BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY.

\* PROVIDE BENEFITS FOR SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS IF THE MINER WAS RECEIVING BENEFITS OR WAS TOTALLY DISABLED BY PNEUMOCONIOSIS AT THE TIME OF DEATH.

\* STIPULATE THAT IF, AS RESULT OF ADMINISTRATIVE OR JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS ON A CLAIM A DETERMINATION IS MADE THAT THE CLAIMANT IS ENTITLED TO BENEFITS, THE CLAIMANT WOULD RECEIVE ALL REASONABLE COSTS INCURRED BY CLAIMANT AS A RESULT OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN ORDER TO COVER LEGAL FEES.