

news

*Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs
Morris K. Udall, Chairman*

*House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515*

FOR RELEASE:

November 2, 1989

CONTACT:

Jim Zoia at (202) 226-7761

RAHALL TO LUJAN: GET COAL ON ENERGY POLICY AGENDA

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Due to his concern that Energy Secretary Watkins' idea of a national energy policy envisions "using natural gas as a bridge fuel to a nuclear future," the Chairman of the House Mining Subcommittee, U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV), today encouraged Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan to become involved in Bush Administration deliberations on the matter.

"I strongly believe that the Interior Department should have a seat at the table when the Administration hammers out the final policy," Rahall stated in remarks delivered before the House of Representatives. "It is, after all, the Interior Department that, on a daily basis, deals with the regulation of the Nation's coal industry and is responsible for the management of energy resources on our public lands and offshore areas."

Energy Secretary James Watkins has taken the lead within the Administration to develop an official energy policy for the United States and the agency has held several public meetings on the subject.

"Frankly, and with all due respect, from what I can tell the word 'coal' has never been spoken by Energy Secretary Watkins. It is my fear that the type of energy policy Secretary Watkins may envision entails using natural gas as a bridge fuel to a nuclear future," Rahall stated. "However, input from an agency with expertise in natural resource issues such as the Interior Department may assist getting coal on the energy policy agenda."

Rahall noted that Interior Secretary Lujan recently announced that he intends to set up working groups on oil and gas production, coal production, energy tax policies and global climate changes within the context of the Bush Administration's deliberations on a national energy policy.