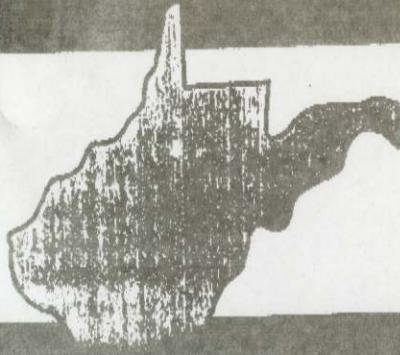


PRESS RELEASE



U.S. Congressman NOV ... A 1989

Nick Rahall

WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1989

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RAHALL STRESSES LINK BETWEEN TRANSPORTATION FUNDING AND TOURISM IN WEST VIRGINIA

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- Congressman Nick J. Rahall, II (D-WV), a member of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation, announced today that the Conference Report on Appropriations for the Department of Transportation for fiscal year 1990 had passed the House, providing funds of vital importance to the tourism industry in West Virginia next year.

"Major modes of transport were funded and that translates into a more easily accessible West Virginia for tourists," said Rahall. "The highways, railroads, and small town airports all received funding for the next fiscal year, despite the administration's attempts to either do away with, or drastically cut, all three."

The agreement provides \$716 million for the Federal Railroad Administration for FY 1990, including \$613 million for Amtrak. This is \$49 million more than last year's level and a full \$655 million more than requested by the Administration. The Bush Administration had requested no funding for Amtrak.

"In West Virginia, the Cardinal not only supplies an important link in our transit system for West Virginians, it also brings people from all over the country to enjoy the beautiful scenery and varied recreational opportunities in our great State," said Rahall. "This funding is important to tourism in West Virginia, our second largest industry."

Also provided for in the bill is \$1.6 billion for the formula grant program which provides mass transportation capital and operating assistance to both urban and non-urban areas. The Conference Report calls for a \$20 million increase over last year's levels.

"West Virginia has a large stake in the formula grant program," said Rahall. "This program is heavily depended upon by West Virginia's rural and urban transportation systems and provides the foundation for systems such as the Tri-State Transit Authority in Huntington."

Another important item of appropriation is the funds for the Essential Air Service (EAS). The EAS was created as a part of deregulation to ensure that smaller communities would still have access to vital air transportation. The agreement provides \$30.7 million for this program.

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"Five communities in West Virginia will receive EAS funding. Two of these areas, Beckley and Bluefield, are located in my Congressional district," said Rahall. "I can personally attest to the vital need for EAS support in these communities. Without the assistance provided by the EAS, the continuation of air service in Southern West Virginia would be in severe jeopardy."

At a time when we in the State are working so hard to address our poor economic situation and broaden our industrial and economic base, some of our greatest hopes lie in our tourism industry. The discontinuation of any air service in the State would be a severe blow to our budding industry," said Rahall.

Most importantly, the report appropriates \$282 million for the Federal Highway Administration, which is \$116 million more than the 1989 level, and \$250 million more than the President requested. The bill also authorizes the release of \$12.2 billion from the Highway Trust Fund for federal highway grants to assist states in the construction and repair of the interstate highway system.

"I am pleased that the conferees have agreed to provide \$10 million to make improvements on Corridor G, and \$32 million to make improvements on Corridor H," said Rahall. "The improvement of our highways in West Virginia is another vital link to the success of our tourism industry."

Rahall continued, "Another encouraging aspect of this bill is \$3.2 billion in FY 1990 funding to combat drug use. Combined with the funding provided in several other appropriations bills, this measure brings total anti-drug funding for the upcoming year to \$8.8 billion. I think it is important that we make a serious commitment to both law enforcement and drug abuse prevention and treatment if we are going to win the 'War on Drugs'. This agreement reflects such a commitment."

"Funding for transportation service, economic development, and drug education-- this is what we should be emphasizing. This is where our money is best spent, not only in West Virginia, but in all of America," concluded Rahall.

STATEMENT OF NICK J. RAHALL, II
SUPPORT FOR THE CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3015, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
APPROPRIATIONS, FY90
OCTOBER 31, 1989

Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the conference report on H.R. 3015, Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations for FY 1990. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight several of the programs funded in this measure that are especially important to my home State of West Virginia.

[The agreement provides \$716 million for the Federal Railroad Administration for FY 1990, including \$613 million provided for Amtrak. This is \$49 million (7%) more than the FY 1989 level, and \$655 million more than requested by the Administration. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration, like the Reagan Administration, has failed to request funding for Amtrak. I am pleased that we in Congress are demonstrating that we have not forgotten those who rely so heavily on Amtrak. [In West Virginia, the Cardinal not only supplies an important link in our transit system for West Virginians, it also brings people from throughout the country to enjoy the beautiful scenery and many recreational opportunities in our great State. This is important since tourism is our second largest industry.]

The agreement also provides funding for programs administered by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration which also was not requested by the Administration. [The agreement appropriates \$1.6 billion for the formula grant program which provides mass transportation capital and operating assistance to both urban and non-urban areas.] This program is heavily depended upon by West Virginia's rural and urban transportation systems and provides the foundation for systems such as the Tri-State Transit Authority in Huntington. While the House bill provided \$80 million more than the FY 1989 level for this program, I am pleased that the conferees provided \$20 million more than last year's level.

Also of great importance to the State of West Virginia is the Essential Air Service (EAS) payments to subsidize airline service to smaller communities. The Essential Air Service was created as part of deregulation to ensure that smaller communities would still have access to vital air transportation. Regrettably, the Administration requested no funds for this program as well. [The agreement provides \$30.7 million for this program. While I am pleased that we in Congress were able to provide these funds, I am concerned that this level is below the \$35.5 million necessary to fund this program adequately.] I am also concerned that this program, like so many programs helpful for economic development, will also be slowly phased-out of existence. I hope we will gain the Administration's support for this, and other such programs.

Five communities in West Virginia will receive EAS funding. Two of these areas, Beckley and Bluefield, are located in my Congressional district, and I can personally attest to the vital need for EAS support in these communities. Without the assistance provided by the EAS, the

continuation of air service in southern West Virginia would be in severe jeopardy. At a time when we in the State are working so hard to address our poor economic situation and broaden our industrial and economic base, some of our greatest hopes lay with our growing tourism industry. The discontinuation of any air service in the State would be a severe blow to that budding industry.

The agreement also ~~appropriates \$282 million for the Federal Highway Administration.~~ This is \$116 million (69%) more than the FY 1989 level, and \$250 million more than the Administration request. The bill also authorizes the release of \$12.2 billion from the Highway Trust Fund for federal highway grants to assist states in the construction and repair of the interstate highway system and secondary roads and bridges. West Virginia and the other states are dependent upon this assistance to maintain and improve this Nation's highway system. I am also pleased that the conferees have agreed to provide \$10 million to make improvements on Corridor G and \$32 million to make improvements on Corridor H.

Finally, the agreement includes \$3.2 billion in FY 1990 funding for programs to combat drug abuse. Combined with the funding provided in several other appropriations bills, this measure brings total anti-drug funding for FY 1990 up to \$8.8 billion. This total is \$900 million (11%) more than President Bush's total request. I think it is important that we make a serious commitment to both law enforcement and drug abuse prevention and treatment if we are going to win the "War on Drugs." This agreement reflects such a commitment.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure, which is not only of great importance to the transportation needs of all West Virginians, but indeed all Americans.