



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: STEVE SPINA

March 8, 1990

Phone: (202) 225-3452

RAHALL TESTIFIES FOR FLOOD CONTROL FUNDING

WASHINGTON, D.C.— U.S. Rep Nick Rahall (D-WV) today testified before the Public Works and Transportation Subcommittee on Water Resources in order to secure funding for two highly regarded flood control projects in Matewan and Huntington, West Virginia.

Rahall testified that floodproofing the entire town of Matewan should be included in this year's Water Resources Bill. As it stands now, the area known as Hatfield Bottom is not provided with Federal funding.

"The entire town of Matewan should be floodproofed since this was the original intention of Congress," said Rahall. "As a result of the 1977 flood, we passed a law to provide floodproofing for a number of cities including Matewan. This floodproofing was to be at full Federal expense. In 1985, the Matewan project was defined, excluding half of the city known as Hatfield Bottom. This was simply a technical distinction made to best facilitate floodproofing."

Rahall added that because of the biased language, half of the town will be fully floodproofed for free by 1991 while the other half, Hatfield Bottom, will have to pay more than \$450,000. "I think we would all hate to see the people of Matewan suffer over a glitch in legislative language," said Rahall.

Rahall also testified for federal cost-share funding of flood control measures along Krouts Creek in Huntington, West Virginia.

"There are over 200 residences, five businesses, and three public buildings including churches and schools located in the 100-year floodplain of Krouts Creek in West Huntington. The Krouts Creek floodplain has received damaging floods several times over the past 25 to 30 years. Now that the area is densely populated, flood damage has become an annual occurrence. The most recent damaging flood occurred in 1987 affecting 30 residences and 3 businesses with a total damage estimate of more than \$100,000," said Rahall.

"Upon my request, and that of the Mayor of Huntington, the Huntington District Corps evaluated a number of flood control measures. In 1988, the corps developed a plan which would protect 50% of the homes in the area from a ten year flood and 30% from a hundred year flood. The total cost was estimated to be \$620,000," said Rahall.

The city of Huntington agreed to pay 50% of the project cost," continued Rahall. "Ordinarily, such a project could be completed under the Corps' continuing authority. Unfortunately, the Corps conducted further studies which stated that the plans were not cost effective, so the Corps does not intend to continue the project. The amount of money that the Corps finds above the cost effective limit is less than \$5,000."

--MORE--

Rahall concluded by saying that the homes and families that could be saved by these flood precautions are certainly worth at least that much, "We are not talking about a great deal of money. If the Federal Government can find a way to spend \$530 million on a plane that rarely leaves the ground, I am sure that they can find it in their heart to appropriate funds to save West Virgians homes."

Rahall asked the Subcommittee members to authorize \$400,000 for the Federal cost-share of this project.