



U.S. Congressman  
**Nick Rahall**  
*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*

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**INSPECTOR GENERAL INVESTIGATION REVEALS  
ANTI-COMPETITIVE FEDERAL CONTRACT PROCUREMENT PRACTICES**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** -- U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today said that the Interior Department had discriminated against West Virginians by placing improper restrictions on who is eligible to compete on federal contracts. As a result of a Rahall requested Inspector General investigation, the matter will be remedied.

"It came to my attention that both the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were engaging in anti-competitive procurement practices that had the effect of denying West Virginians the right to bid on federal contracts right in our own backyard," Rahall said. "The Inspector General has informed me that he agrees. The investigation concludes that these federal agencies improperly limited competition in awarding contracts."

According to Rahall, last year West Virginia State Senator J.D. Brackenrich (11th Senatorial District) advised him that the Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service had advertised federal contracts for projects, one of which was located in the eastern United States, and the other for projects throughout the country, but stipulated that only people who lived in the Denver, Colorado, area were eligible to bid.

"Both Senator Brackenrich and I thought this requirement was outrageous, and without any justification whatsoever," Rahall said. "There simply was no reason to limit the eligibility to bid on contracts to people who live in Denver, Colorado, especially when the work is for the eastern United States."

The \$500,000 Park Service contract was for civil and engineering projects in the eastern United States and the Fish and Wildlife Service solicitation, estimated at \$11.8 million, was for architect-engineer services on dam-related projects. Rahall subsequently requested an investigation into the practice by the Interior Department's Inspector General.

"We concluded that the Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service unduly limited full and open competition in the contract award process by including geographical limitations in related procurement announcements," Inspector General James R. Richards wrote to Rahall this week. "As a result, firms interested in providing services to the Government in these cases were excluded from the contract award process, and there was no assurance that the Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service obtained the services of the most qualified firm at fair and reasonable prices," the report added.

"I want to thank Senator Brackenrich for bringing this matter to my attention," Rahall said. "This investigation means there will be more opportunities for West Virginians to obtain federal contracts."

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