



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RAHALL VOTES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT BILL

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- In action on the House floor Thursday, U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) voted with the majority, 365-41, in support of the Rural Economic Development Bill. This legislation would, in sweeping fashion, increase federal funding of rural water and sewer grants from \$155 million to \$500 million along with establishing a new Rural Development Administration (RDA).

"The new RDA would administer Agriculture Department rural development programs relating to rural and small community development, such as water and sewer, business and industry, and community facility loan and grant programs," said Rahall. "This new branch would be designed to look out for the "little guy" programs that are so important to West Virginia. The RDA would provide greater influence, in Congress and the Executive Branch, for existing programs used by rural areas."

Rahall added that along with giving these programs greater influence and better coordination, the bill also establishes a new mechanism for delivery of federal rural development assistance. The mechanism is designed to increase state and local involvement and aid their ability to determine funding priorities.

"Greater local and state involvement in the decision making process means more accurate funding for critical projects," explained Rahall. "After all, who knows their needs better than the state and local community governments."

"But most important, let's not lose sight of what the bill really provides: a voice for the little guy. The RDA will let the federal government know just what we in West Virginia need and how much," said Rahall.

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PRESS FACTS
RURAL DEVELOPMENT - H.R. 3581

MAJOR PROVISIONS

- The most important provision of the bill is an increase of authorization for rural water and sewer grants from \$155 million to \$500 million. One of the most keys to economic development in West Virginia and other rural areas is the construction of adequate water and sewer infrastructure. Without clean water and adequate sewer systems, you can't attract new businesses, and no new businesses means no new jobs. This substantial increase, while not enough, will go a long way.
- The bill establishes a new Rural Development Administration to administer Agriculture Department rural development programs relating to rural and small community development such as the water and sewer, business and industry, and community facility loan and grant programs. The new Rural Development Administration is intended to provide existing programs used by rural areas greater influence both in Congress and the Executive Branch and allow for greater coordination.
- The bill also establishes a new mechanism for delivery of federal rural development assistance designed to increase state and local involvement and their ability to determine funding priorities. Greater local and state involvement and decision-making authority means more prudent funding allocation. The states and local communities know their needs better than anyone else.

365-41 in favor