



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

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**RAHALL MOVES AGAINST FEDERAL POLICY FORCING STATES
TO ACCEPT LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE**
Says WV Will Not Become Nation's Waste Capitol

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A federal agency's attempt to force states and localities to accept low-level radioactive waste in their municipal landfills would be blocked by legislation introduced today by U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV).

"We are faced with an egregious abuse of the right of West Virginia and other states to protect the environment and the health, safety and welfare of its citizens from the dangers of low-level radioactivity," Rahall charged. "The states must not be held hostage to such an ill-conceived and draconian federal policy."

The Rahall bill comes close on the heels of last week's Congressional hearing on a new Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) policy that would allow certain low-level radioactive waste to be disposed in municipal landfills instead of licensed facilities. Currently, low-level radioactive waste may be dumped in only one of three federally licensed facilities in the country. According to the NRC, it has the authority to force the states to accept low-level radioactive waste in local landfills even if a state or locality is opposed to the practice.

Under the "Low-Level Radioactive Waste Environmental and Health Protection Act of 1990," the federal government would be prevented from forcing states to accept low-level radioactive waste in their municipal landfills. Rahall is the first Member of Congress to introduce legislation to protect state's rights in response to the recent NRC policy.

Citing concerns about the impact of such a policy on the State, Rahall declared that "West Virginia will not become the Nation's low-level radioactive waste capitol." During the July 26th hearing on the NRC policy by the House Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment, Rahall claimed that as landfills in the Northeast reach their maximum capacity the states will target West Virginia as their alternative municipal waste dumping ground.

"As if the pressure on West Virginia to deal with out-of-state waste as a result of the Nation's landfill crisis isn't enough, here comes the federal government telling us we would have to handle the Nation's low-level radioactive waste as well," Rahall said. "There is simply no excuse, explanation, or justification for this policy. I oppose it to the core and will fight to protect West Virginians from the threat of disposal of one ounce of low-level radioactive waste in any of our landfills."

Rahall noted that the NRC policy is extremely short-sighted as well. By January 1, 1993, states will be required to dispose of their low-level radioactive waste in one of twelve facilities that would be licensed. West Virginia is a member of the Appalachian Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact in which Pennsylvania has agreed to be designated as the host state to low-level radioactive waste from associated compact states.