



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

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RAHALL: NO FREE RIDE IN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA -- While the public's awareness of the importance of secure and stable supplies of energy appears to be guided by events in the Middle East, the United States must continue to pursue as a goal the prudent use of the Nation's rich fossil fuels heritage, was the message U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) delivered in his keynote address before the Virginia Coal Council's Annual Conference and Exposition in Roanoke, Virginia, today.

"They say that the past is prologue," Rahall said noting that the October 1973 Yom Kippur War led to the Arab Oil Embargo and prompted the Nixon and Ford Administrations to devise what was known as Project Independence. In 1978, the revolution in Iran and the disruption of oil supplies from that region caused Jimmy Carter to equate the energy situation as the 'moral equivalent of war' with the result being the National Energy Plan 1. "In 1990, it took the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq to once again waken the public's conscious to energy issues," Rahall said.

"The question we in this country face, once we understand that all the answers cannot be found solely in conservation and the so-called benign sources of energy, are what tradeoffs and sacrifices are acceptable to our society if we intend to maintain the high standard of living we have in this country," Rahall stated. "The bottom line is that there is no free ride in energy development."

To illustrate his point, Rahall said that in the Northeast there is opposition to coal-fired powerplants for fear of acid rain. "Apparently, what they do favor are imports of crude oil and Canadian hydroelectric power. This is not a fair or honest approach. Not only does it serve to aggravate the balance of trade deficit, it also has the effect of exporting environmental problems to other countries," he said.

"I, for one, hold that a growing economy with ever rising electricity demands simply cannot restrict itself to a policy based on less energy production and use. This means there is, and must be, a role to play for coal in any realistic national energy policy."

According to Rahall, after the neglect displayed toward energy matters by the Reagan Administration, President Bush is to be commended for seeking to establish a national energy strategy. The current plan is for the Energy Department to finalize what is being viewed as an options paper by the end of the year with a Presidential decision to be made by next April.

The resolution of at least one long-standing issue of concern to the coal industry, Rahall said, bodes well for southern West Virginia and Virginia. Under either the House or Senate version of the pending acid rain control legislation the low-sulfur coal produced in these areas will not only be able to hold existing markets but expand its electric utility market share.

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