



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

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TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today called on Secretary of Transportation Sam Skinner to remember the coal industry when he fashions a plan for transportation into the next century, citing West Virginia's impact on America's energy needs.

"What does this policy say to the people who live along some of the most dangerous energy oriented roads in the world," questioned Rahall. "There is a very real linkage between our efforts to have clean air in this country, and the deaths that are occurring regularly along these roads."

Rahall questioned the Administration's attempt to reduce the federal matching share to 60 percent thereby forcing some of the poorest areas of the country to come up with astronomical sums of money to see the roads built.

"A 60 percent match by the federal government puts too much burden on already financially strapped states. In West Virginia, your not just paving your way through a desert, we're talking about blowing through a mountain. It is going to take a bigger match than that to blow through the mountains of West Virginia," said Rahall.

Rahall also raised the concerns of many state and local leaders with the administration's attempt to provide the states with greater flexibility in spending of less federal money.

"Are states supposed to be so enamored by this 'flexibility' that they will be willing to receive fewer federal matching dollars just to have it," asked Rahall.

The Public Works and Transportation Committee is scheduled to hold committee hearings until late April. The committee hopes to have a draft bill completed by early May.

Rep. Rahall is a ranking member of the Public Works and Transportation Committee and is ranking on the Surface Transportation Subcommittee.

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