



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

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RAHALL' SURPLUS PROPERTY BILL CLEARS MAJOR HURDLE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall's (D-WV) Surplus Property Bill cleared a major hurdle this week as the Armed Services' subcommittee on Readiness held hearings, and expressed their thanks to Rep. Rahall for his initiative in bringing the seriousness of the problem to their attention.

The legislation, H.R. 919, would authorize state surplus property divisions to receive first crack at excess Defense Department equipment. The equipment, which up until now had been offered to foreign governments first, is invaluable to West Virginia in helping small towns and rural hamlets obtain heavy equipment at rock-bottom prices.

Ken Frye, the Director of Surplus Property in West Virginia, travelled to Washington to testify before the Committee. He echoed the sentiments of Surplus Property Directors nationwide saying, "I can tell you that millions of dollars worth of equipment is being used by hundreds of communities throughout West Virginia.

"Without the surplus property," Frye continued, "these communities would not be able to generate electricity in time of emergency, they would not be able to haul garbage to a landfill some 15-20 miles away."

Rep. Rahall, who introduced the same measure last Congress, agreed with Frye. "All of these pieces of equipment should be on their way to the people who paid for them -- the American taxpayer. This property should be helping our cities, towns, and counties."

Rahall pointed out that it cost the Defense Department \$46 million to transport \$48 million worth of equipment overseas.

"Almost \$100 million out of the taxpayers' pocket to build and ship merchandise that was rightfully theirs. Just to put that amount in perspective, \$100 million could have been used to cover 60 percent of the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) budget."

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