



U.S. Congressman

**Nick Rahall***WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****JUNE 3, 1991****CONTACT: STEVE SPINA****PHONE: (202) 225-3452****RAHALL, CAPERTON TESTIFY ON ROADS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) and Governor Gaston Caperton today both testified before a House subcommittee on transportation, telling the Members that the commitment to Appalachia must continue to be strong and that an improved infrastructure includes a completed corridor system.

"We must give top priority to our corridor system," said Rahall. "Because if 20 million people in Appalachia continue to live in isolation, then a Highways of National Significance system becomes meaningless."

The Congressman introduced the Governor who spoke to the subcommittee on the integral part that the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) have played in improving the plight of Appalachia.

"We have made considerable progress," said Caperton. "But much of our region still lags behind in unemployment rates, per capita income, poverty rates, and population growth."

Caperton said that through 1991 in West Virginia alone, more than \$747 million of ARC highway funds have been utilized to construct the corridor system. Of the total 425 miles that is the Appalachian Highway System, 280 miles, or 66 percent has been completed.

Rahall said that at the current rate the Appalachian highway system would not be finished until the year 2065. Rahall recently reintroduced legislation that called for \$2.3 billion to freed up from the Highway Trust Fund for completion of the Appalachian Highway System.

"Appalachia cannot wait another 75 years to complete this system," said Rahall. "We must put Appalachia back on the map, Mr. Chairman, and consider the 20 million souls who live there. Fathers and mothers in Appalachia want the same dream for themselves and their children as the rest of this country -- a decent job, good wages, decent housing, and an equal opportunity to educate their children."

Rep. Rahall is a ranking Member of the both the Public Works and Transportation Committee and the Surface Transportation Subcommittee. The Congress is expected to pass a major highway bill this year.

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