



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall

WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

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NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE TO PROVIDE STATE TROOPERS RULERS?

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today charged as "outrageous" a planned National Weather Service policy to enlist West Virginia State Troopers as weather observers.

"I can not comprehend the Weather Services reasoning," questioned Rahall. "On one hand they want to close and consolidate weather stations around this country, including Beckley and Huntington because of their modern equipment. Then on the other, when questioned about the new system's ability, they give you, 'don't worry, we'll get your state police to do our job.' I predict thunderstorms are brewing in the Congress to rain on the Service's plan."

Rahall added that the Weather Service's argument that the concept of a "multilayered approach to observe thunderstorms, ice pellets (sleet) and snow depth" that relies on the state police to observe the weather is one of the most outrageous responses he had heard from a federal agency in 15 years of public service.

"What on this earth makes you believe the West Virginia State Police have the time, the manpower, and the resources to assist you in observing the weather," said Rahall in a sharply worded letter to Dr. Elbert Friday.

"I contacted the Superintendent of our State Police, Colonel J.R. Buckalew, to get his thoughts on your multilayered approach. His response was very clear. When dangerous weather conditions exist, his officers' primary responsibility is saving lives, and the last thing he said they would have time to do is to call up the National Weather Service," boomed Rahall.

Rahall concluded, "I do appreciate the fact that you have now recognized the need for the human element in weather observation. However, I must ask, don't you think that federal law mandates that it is YOUR responsibility to provide warning and forecast weather services for the public safety?"

"No where in the law do I see that responsibility given to the West Virginia State Police. Before you spend the taxpayer's money buying rulers for them to measure snow depth, I think you need to review again your eventual intent, and evidently your desire, to close weather stations around this nation."

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