



U.S. Congressman  
**Nick Rahall**  
*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**FATE OF PROPOSED POWERLINE AFFECTED BY LEGISLATION  
CONSIDERED BY HOUSE PANEL THIS WEEK**

*Rahall Says That More Stringent Requirements Are Necessary*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. --** U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) announced today that the House Interior Committee will consider legislation on Wednesday, April 8th, that would affect the fate of the proposed 765 kilovolt APCO electric transmission line.

In order to be constructed as proposed, the powerline requires rights-of-way across federal lands managed by the Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service. The Forest Service, through the Jefferson National Forest, has been designated as the lead federal agency to conduct the necessary Environmental Impact Statement.

Rahall said that the Interior Committee will take up legislation that would provide for new and more stringent requirements to govern the consideration of applications for rights-of-way across federal lands. The West Virginia congressman is a senior member of the committee.

"The Jefferson National Forest has been pretty insensitive to the concerns already being expressed by citizens over the way it is going about considering the effect granting rights-of-way for the powerline would have," Rahall stated. "This legislation would give the Forest Service some needed direction in that regard and toughen the standards under which it could approve a right-of-way."

According to Rahall, there are two key points in the legislation. First, it would require "early and continued public participation in connection with consideration of an application for a right-of-way."

Rahall has previously stated that the public must have confidence in the Jefferson National Forest's actions as they relate to the proposed powerline. "It will be the people of southern West Virginia, not nameless, faceless federal bureaucrats, who will suffer the consequences of any shortcomings in the review of this proposal," he said.

Secondly, the bill would allow the Forest Service to approve a right-of-way for a powerline only if it: "Will not result in substantial degradation of natural or cultural resources, scenic or recreational values, watershed resources, or fish and wildlife populations or habitat affected by the proposed system or affected by the cumulative effects of the proposed system and other uses of such lands or adjacent lands."

"This language will give iron-clad protection to those resource values which we in southern West Virginia cherish," Rahall said.

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