



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

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CONTACT: JIM ZOIA
(202) 226-7761

NEW RIVER DESIGNATION
Rahall Acts on Shanklins Ferry Accord

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today followed through on what he called the "Shanklins Ferry Accord" by introducing legislation aimed at providing federal protection to the segment of the New River where the controversial APCO powerline is proposed to cross.

One week ago, elected officials representing Monroe, Summers and Mercer Counties and a large group of concerned citizens convened on the banks of the New River at Shanklins Ferry campground. There, Rahall said they were setting in motion a chain of events leading to the designation of the 17-mile segment of the New River from the West Virginia-Virginia state line to the Bluestone Lake under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

"On the banks of the New Rivers, at a place called Shanklins Ferry, we entered into an accord to protect this river," Rahall said. "Our intent is to preserve the rural characteristics of the New River valley. To insure that the New River stays like it is, wild and scenic, for the benefit of the people of southern West Virginia."

Under the "New River Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 1992" the Secretary of the Interior would conduct a study to determine whether the river segment is eligible for inclusion under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and report to the Congress within a one-year period.

The designation of a river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act normally entails a two-step process, starting with enactment of legislation to require an eligibility study. Based on the study's findings, Congress then considers legislation to designate the river as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The purpose of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is to preserve, in their free-flowing condition, river segments which possess outstanding scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, historic and cultural values. In West Virginia, a segment of the Bluestone River is designated as a National Scenic River while both the Gauley River National Recreation Area and the New River Gorge National River designations include protections from the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

If enacted into law, the Rahall bill would cause the river to fall under the interim protections afforded study rivers. While these protections do not directly block transmission lines from crossing a study river segment, federal agencies normally are reluctant to take actions that would adversely affect the values for which the river is being studied. The proposed APCO line, for example, would require a federal right-of-way across this segment of the New River.