

July 23, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senator and Senate Majority Leader
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2803

The Honorable John Ensign
United States Senator
364 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid and Senator Ensign:

The 2007 Nevada Legislative Session recently adjourned and Nevada's Legislative Committee on Public Lands has completed its work for the 2005-2006 legislative interim period. As you know, the Committee travels throughout Nevada and to Washington, D.C., during the 18 months between legislative sessions to listen to citizens' concerns about public lands issues and to review federal and state land management policies with various elected officials, agency personnel, interest groups, and private organizations. In addition, the Committee actively monitors federal legislation impacting Nevada and strives to maintain open communication with federal agency representatives, local government officials, and public land users.

The management of wild horses is an ongoing topic discussed by Nevada's Legislative Committee on Public Lands. As you know, because forage on Nevada rangelands is limited and must be shared among wildlife, livestock, and wild horses, public land managers are required to set appropriate management levels (AMLs) for wild horses on each of Nevada's 103 herd management areas (HMAs). Current AML in Nevada is 14,500. The AML may be influenced by many factors, most notably fire and drought. Achieving and maintaining the ideal AML requires periodic removal of horses and, in recent years, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has been very successful in maintaining AMLs in most of Nevada's HMAs.

Currently, the BLM's adoption program is the only available option to care for animals removed from the range. The success of the program is dependent on the availability of adopters, the adoptability of the animals, and the publicity associated with the BLM's National Wild Horse and Burro Program. The adoption market also affects range management because if adoption targets

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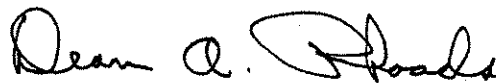
are not met, BLM preparation and holding facilities quickly reach capacity. When the facilities are full, gathers must be reduced or facilities must be relieved by transporting unadoptable animals to wild horse "sanctuaries" in the Midwest. Testimony before the Committee from the BLM suggested that transporting horses from Nevada to the sanctuaries is very costly and often detrimental to a horse's health. Moreover, the costs to maintain the wild horses at the sanctuaries are high.

The Committee on Public Lands seemed interested in an idea contemplated at several meetings and during its two informational tours to Washington, D.C., whereby gathered wild horses would not be transported to Midwest sanctuaries, but rather remain in Nevada under the care of ranchers and farmers. The ranchers and farmers would receive remuneration from the BLM for the care of the horses and, with the appropriate grazing rule changes, utilize existing grazing permits for the wild horses. This practice could allow gathered horses to remain in Nevada in a controlled environment and eliminate the need to transport the horses cross-country. This truly would be a "win-win" situation for the ranchers, farmers, the BLM, and of course, the gathered wild horses.

The Committee is very intrigued and supportive of this concept and voted to send you this letter encouraging the U.S. Congress, with the support of the Department of the Interior and the BLM, to consider revising current BLM policies to allow more ranchers and farmers in Nevada and the West to hold or care for gathered wild horses that would, under most circumstances, be shipped to wild horse sanctuaries in the Midwest. The Committee believes this would be a healthier and safer alternative for Nevada's gathered wild horses and would save a tremendous amount of money that may be directed toward other BLM initiatives relating to wild horses.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts in addressing critical wild horse issues at the federal level and for your kind consideration of this letter. As always, please feel free to contact me if the Committee or I may be of any assistance to you.

Sincerely,



Senator Dean A. Rhoads
Chairman, Nevada's Legislative
Committee on Public Lands