



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES

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October 30, 2009

Senator Harry Reid
US Senate, Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: 1) The Restore Our American Mustangs Act (ROAM)
HR 1018 and SB 1579
2) Proposals Introduced by Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar.

Dear Senator Harry Reid,

The Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses is a Nevada State Agency that has been overseeing the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) wild horse program in Nevada since 1985. Our agency's mission is to protect the habitat and welfare of wild horses and is essential to the Western Wild Horse Legacy and to our state and local economy. With over 87% of Nevada in federal ownership and hosting 60% of our nation's wild horses, Nevada continues to be the primary stakeholder in the national wild horse program.

The Commission has functioned in partnership with the federal agencies and wild horse advocates to meet the Act's goal to achieve a natural ecological balance on our public rangelands.

Nevada's Wild Horse Commission supports a review and responsible changes to the Wild Horse and Burro Act that will better facilitate management of the public lands and the wild horse and burro program. Provisions addressing legislative and regulatory attention for fertility control, excess wild horses and burros, range health, short and long term holding, and sanctuaries provide the direction and resources necessary to manage herds both on the range and through placement after removal.

We support the allocation of resources based upon current monitoring and evaluations of the habitat through established land use planning processes and the lands ability to support the multiple users in a thriving natural ecological balance.

EXHIBIT F-2 - LANDS
Document consists of 4 pages.
Entire Exhibit Provided
Meeting Date: 11-06-09

Extensive efforts in Nevada to achieve the Appropriate Management Levels for Wild Horses and Burros has led the federal government to the point of non sustainability of holding facilities and adoption of excess animals. These times require alternatives to the status quo practices and allow for proper resource management of our public lands and humane treatment of animals. Amendments to the Wild Horse and Burro Act must focus on providing greater support for the management practices that have shown success and modify the weaker aspects of legislation that inhibit progress.

We strongly support the recent program directions and goals proposed by the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar to "restore the health of America's wild horse herds and the rangelands that support them by creating a cost-efficient, sustainable management program."

We support his proposals:

- 1) "The creation of wild horse preserves on the productive grasslands of the Midwest and East." That these be for sanctuary type horses, non breeding, to live out their days while in a more cost efficient manner than the current program.
- 2) "Managing the new preserves either directly by the BLM or through cooperative agreements between the BLM and private non-profit organization or other partners to reduce the Bureau's off-the-range holding costs."
- 3) "Showcasing certain herds on public lands in the West that warrant distinct recognition with Secretarial or possibly congressional designations. These would highlight the special qualities of America's wild horses while generating eco-tourism for nearby rural communities."
- 4) "Applying new strategies aimed at balancing wild horse and burro population growth rates with public adoption demand. This effort would involve slowing population growth rates of wild horses on Western public rangelands through the aggressive use of fertility control, the active management of sex ratios on the range, and perhaps even the introduction of non-reproducing herds in some of the BLM's existing Herd Management Areas in 10 Western States. This strategy would also include placing more animals into private care by making adoptions more flexible where appropriate."

In closing, we have a number of concerns with the current ROAM legislation before Congress that is not only conflicting in itself, but very dangerous to the health of this program. Please see attachment.

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We look forward to working with Congress, the Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, and our representatives to support responsible changes to the wild horse and burro program for better, more efficient means of controlling wild horse populations, enhancing the adoption program, and at the same time, enjoying their existence on our public lands.

Thank you for your consideration on these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Michael Kirk", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Michael Kirk, DVM, Chairman
Nevada Wild Horse Commission

cc: Catherine Barcomb, Administrator, Nevada Wild Horse Commission
Members of Congress
Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar,
BLM Director, Bob Abbey
National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board
Allen Biaggi, Director, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Wild Horse Commissioners

COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF **Wild Horses**

- 1) Leo Heil bequeathed \$475,000 to the State of Nevada for the Preservation and Protection of Nevada's wild horses;
- 2) Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses created by the 1985 Legislature;
- 3) With original trust and interest income the Commission has operated, awarded grants of \$675,000, and additionally, has facilitated \$880,000 grants to other wild horse programs;
- 4) The Commission created and, with the Bureau of Land Management, co-funded the Mustang Heritage Foundation;
- 5) The Commission developed the Nevada Wild Horse Inmate Gentling Program assisting in a successful wild horse adoption program;
- 6) The Commission administrator annually reviews in excess of 250 land use planning documents affecting Nevada's rangelands
- 7) The Commission has never received any State of Nevada general fund dollars;
- 8) The Heil bequest sunsets approximately March 2010 and the Commission office will cease to exist;
- 9) Oversight of the BLM and Forest Service wild horse activities in Nevada will cease to exist.
- 10) The Commission operates on \$120,000 annually;
- 11) With existing funds still available and if the Commission received \$120,000 now, the office would be open through July 1, 2011, which would give the Commission the opportunity to address the 2011 session of the Nevada Legislature for continued funding.



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