

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. HJ0003

Wild horses and burros-best management practices.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Winter, Banks, Davis, Neiman
and Sommers and Senator(s) Driskill and
Laursen, D

A JOINT RESOLUTION

for

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION requesting the United States Congress to
2 enact legislation and make other necessary policy changes to
3 allow federal land management agencies and agency partners to
4 implement best management practices for wild horses and
5 burros by allowing for equine slaughter and processing for
6 shipment to accommodating markets inside or outside the
7 United States.

8

9 WHEREAS, the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971
10 (the Act), as amended, protects wild horses and burros from
11 harassment or death and declares that wild free-roaming
12 horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and
13 pioneer spirit of the West; and

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1 WHEREAS, under the Act, wild horses and burros are managed by
2 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the United States
3 Forest Service (USFS) in their respective jurisdictions and
4 within the areas where these animals were found roaming in
5 1971; and

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7 WHEREAS, the BLM manages public lands for multiple use and a
8 sustained yield, as mandated by the Federal Land Policy and
9 Management Act (FLPMA); and

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11 WHEREAS, when considering the Act and the FLPMA together, the
12 BLM is required to protect wild horses and burros in balance
13 with other public resources and uses, including other
14 wildlife and fish, recreation, range, timber, minerals,
15 watershed and natural scenic, scientific and historical
16 values; and

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18 WHEREAS, responsible management of wild horse and burro
19 populations is critical to protect scarce and fragile
20 resources in the arid West and ensure healthy wildlife and
21 livestock; and

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1 WHEREAS, without responsible management, the resources in the
2 arid West cannot be managed for multiple use because wild
3 horses unduly infringe upon other uses by damaging riverbeds
4 and overgrazing on limited forage, while using and often
5 damaging the infrastructure of other public land users; and

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7 WHEREAS, with virtually no natural predators, wild horse and
8 burro populations can double every four (4) to five (5) years
9 if left unchecked; and

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11 WHEREAS, due to their protected status, if a wild horse or
12 burro strays onto privately owned lands, the private
13 landowners have no recourse for the infringement of their
14 private property rights other than to inform their local BLM
15 or USFS field office to seek removal of the animal; and

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17 WHEREAS, under the Act, the BLM and USFS must inventory wild
18 horse and burro populations periodically to determine
19 appropriate management levels (AMLs) to maintain a thriving
20 natural ecological balance and preserve the multiple-use
21 relationship on public lands; and

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1 WHEREAS, under the Act, the BLM and USFS are authorized to
2 remove wild horses and burros to achieve AMLs upon the
3 respective agency's determination that an overpopulation
4 exists; and

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6 WHEREAS, upon that determination, the Act requires the agency
7 first to order old, sick, or lame animals to be destroyed in
8 the most humane manner possible, second to cause excess wild
9 horses and burros to be humanely captured for private adoption
10 and third, to cause excess animals to be destroyed in the
11 most humane and cost-efficient manner possible; and

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13 WHEREAS, the BLM and USFS are increasingly unable to
14 adequately manage wild horse and burro populations due to
15 exponential increases in the number of wild horses and burros
16 on the range, difficulties in adopting or selling wild horses
17 and burros, lack of effective fertility control measures,
18 lawsuits prohibiting or stalling gathers and removals,
19 insufficient availability of holding facilities and
20 increasing management costs; and

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22 WHEREAS, of the one hundred seventy-seven (177) herd
23 management areas across ten (10) western states under the

1 jurisdiction of the BLM, comprising almost twenty-seven
2 million (27,000,000) acres, only approximately twenty percent
3 (20%) fall within their attendant AML; and

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5 WHEREAS, the BLM recognizes the need for decisive action to
6 reverse the harm to western landscapes and the wild horses
7 and burros occupying them, as demonstrated by the agency's
8 "2020 Report to Congress: An Analysis of Achieving a
9 Sustainable Wild Horse and Burro Program;" and

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11 WHEREAS, off-range holding of gathered animals accomplishes
12 neither free-ranging of the animals nor population control
13 and amounts to great expense, as demonstrated by the BLM
14 fiscal year 2021 off-range holding expenditures of seventy-
15 seven million seven hundred thousand dollars
16 (\$77,700,000.00); and

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18 WHEREAS, under the Federal Meat Inspection Act of 1906, United
19 States Department of Agriculture inspection is mandatory to
20 sell meat in interstate or foreign commerce; and

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22 WHEREAS, the United States Congress has effectively banned
23 horse slaughter in the United States for human consumption

1 since 2007 by denying funding for the inspection of equine
2 slaughter facilities throughout the food production process.
3 Federal appropriations laws since 1988 have contained similar
4 prohibitions; and

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6 WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2022 Department of Interior
7 appropriations law prohibited the use of funds for
8 destruction of healthy animals or for sales of animals that
9 result in processing into commercial products; and

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11 WHEREAS, the Act, combined with the effect of the United
12 States Congress' effective ban on equine slaughter
13 facilities, has created an unsustainable issue where wild
14 horse and burro populations continue to expand exponentially;
15 and

16

17 WHEREAS, the United States has benefitted from the ability of
18 neighboring countries to provide equine slaughter services.
19 The capacity of those neighboring countries to provide these
20 services is limited, however, and has been degraded by the
21 closure of facilities as well as the challenges associated
22 with transporting animals long distances. Effective and
23 humane management of wild horses and burros can be best

1 accomplished by facilitating the United States' own capacity
2 to transport and process wild horses and burros; and

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4 WHEREAS, the wild horse and burro population's continued
5 exponential growth and the federal agencies' continued
6 inability to adequately manage these populations to attain
7 AMLs presents an urgent concern for management policy and
8 practice; and

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10 WHEREAS, a pragmatic shift in United States' wild horse and
11 burro management policy is prudent and necessary to help
12 address this crisis and achieve protection of wild horses and
13 burros in manageable numbers; and

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15 WHEREAS, policy tools must be implemented to authorize equine
16 domestic slaughter, to allow horse and burro meat inspection
17 and sale and to facilitate the humane transport of wild horses
18 and burros both domestically and to other countries or
19 sovereigns for slaughter.

20

21 *NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE*
22 *LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING:*

23

1 **Section 1.** That the Legislature of the State of Wyoming
2 requests the United States Congress to enact legislation and
3 make other necessary policy changes to allow federal land
4 management agencies and agency partners to implement best
5 management practices for wild horses and burros by allowing
6 for equine slaughter and processing for shipment to
7 accommodating markets within or outside the United States.

8

9 **Section 2.** That the Legislature of the State of Wyoming
10 requests the United States Congress to enact legislation and
11 make other necessary policy changes to allow federal land
12 management agencies and agency partners to work with states
13 and Indian tribes with respect to the management, gathering
14 and disposition of wild horses and burros.

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16 **Section 3.** That the Legislature of the State of Wyoming
17 requests the United States Congress to enact legislation and
18 make other necessary policy changes to remove impediments to
19 the disposition of gathered wild horses and burros, including
20 equine slaughter and processing.

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1 **Section 4.** That the Secretary of State of Wyoming
2 transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the
3 United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
4 of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress,
5 to the Secretary of the Interior and to the Wyoming
6 Congressional Delegation.

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8

(END)