



September 10, 2018

The Honorable Lisa A. Murkowski
United State Senate
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ken S. Calvert
United States House of Representatives
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom S. Udall
United States Senate
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Betty McCollum
United States House of Representatives
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairpersons and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the American Wild Horse Campaign, the country's largest wild horse and burro preservation organization, and the Animal Welfare Institute, one of the nation's oldest animal welfare organizations dedicated to reducing the suffering inflicted on animals by humans, we are writing to urge you to reject the Report Language and funding included in the House-passed Interior appropriations bill by Congressman Chris Stewart, now part of H.R. 6147, the Interior, Environment, Financial Services and General Government, Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act, 2019.

The bill is yet another significant threat to wild horses from the House with the inclusion of a requirement that BLM "... manage any group of wild horses or burros as a nonreproducing or single-sex herd, in whole or in part, including through chemical or surgical sterilization" and by providing \$15 million (nearly 20% of the entire program budget) to do so. The process of surgically sterilizing wild horses in the field is barbaric, expensive, and medically indefensible. Mandating this procedure, known as ovariectomy via colpotomy, which the National Academy of Sciences specifically recommended against due to risks to mares, will destroy America's wild herds and implicate Congress in this cruel, counterproductive scheme by BLM that is unacceptable to a vast majority of Americans.

This plan for wild horses is simply not necessary; PZP fertility control vaccine is available to humanely and cost-effectively manage population growth rates on the range without affecting their natural behaviors. This is the only currently available method that was recommended by the National Academy of Sciences for management of BLM wild horse herds. Unlike surgical sterilization, PZP is supported by science and years of success in the field, and Congress has for

years directed BLM to use it. But BLM has refused to implement PZP in any meaningful way, spending a total of 0% of its budget on it in each of the past five fiscal years.

Lastly, in addition to the Stewart amendment, this legislation will open the door to killing healthy horses older than 10 years, even though such horses are often in their prime and many live more than 20 years. The bill is seeking by obfuscation to do what Congress has repeatedly rejected - the mass slaughter of healthy horses.

The American people have been clear. They want horses protected. The numbers are overwhelming and cut across parties, regions, demographics and cultural lines. By a stunning 86% -11% margin, Nevadans, the state with the largest number of wild horses, want them protected. In total, 80% of Americans oppose horse slaughter, including 90 percent of women, 83% of westerners, 72% of rural voters and 82% of Independents. Specifically, on the question of wild horses, 80% of Americans – including 86% of Trump voters and 77% of Clinton voters— want them protected, not slaughtered. Additionally, more than 100 wild horse organizations from around the country recently signed a statement of principles that includes opposition to surgical sterilization.

The House language authorizing BLM to manage wild horses in non-reproducing or single sex herds would change existing law and threatens to violate the commitment Congress made to protect wild horses on public lands. As the U.S. District Court in Idaho ruled last year, the BLM has a legal mandate to manage wild horses in self-sustaining herds and to protect the natural free-roaming behaviors of wild horses and burros. The House language would gut this legal requirement, overturning nearly 50 years of protections put in place by a unanimous Congress, and turning these majestic wild herds into docile museum exhibits, for those lucky enough to survive the barbaric procedure. We urge you to reject the Stewart Amendment.



Suzanne Roy
Executive Director
American Wild Horse Campaign



Cathy Liss
President
Animal Welfare Institute