



October 10, 2018

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Attorney General, State of California  
1300 I Street, Suite 125  
Sacramento, CA 95814-2951  
[AttorneyGeneral@doj.ca.gov](mailto:AttorneyGeneral@doj.ca.gov)

*Via email*

**RE: Requesting enforcement to protect California's wild horses**

Dear Attorney General Becerra,

We the undersigned organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of Californians, are urging you to take immediate action to enforce California Penal Code § 598c, by informing the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) that the sale of horses without limitation for slaughter is prohibited in California. We are heartened by your steadfast, proactive protection of people, animals, and natural resources from actions by the federal government that do not reflect the values of Californians.

The USFS intends to conduct a roundup of 1,000 federally protected wild horses from the Devils Garden Wild Horse Territory in the Modoc National Forest near Alturas, California beginning today. Some of these horses will be offered for adoption to interested parties – a move that our groups support. However, after a holding period of 30 days, the USFS intends to sell captured horses over the age of 10 “without limitation,” meaning horses could be sold without the standard prohibitions on slaughter and destruction for commercial purposes. Because horse slaughter plants are barred from operating in the United States., U.S. horses purchased for slaughter are shipped to Canada or Mexico to horse slaughter plants that produce horsemeat for human consumption.

The USFS's decision to sell horses without limitation on slaughter flies in the face of public opinion – 80 percent of Americans oppose the slaughter of horses and Californians approved the 1998 ballot initiative banning horse slaughter in the state. It also violates the intent of Congress, which annually prohibits the Bureau of Land Management – the agency that manages the vast majority of federally-protected wild horses in the U.S. – from selling these animals for commercial processing.

Previous administrations have respected Congress's clear intent to prevent the sale of federally-protected wild horses for slaughter by ensuring that the Forest Service maintained a no-slaughter policy for the much smaller number of federally-protected wild horses and burros it manages. This policy has changed under the current administration, which is

allowing the Forest Service to sell wild horses for slaughter – an abrupt departure from past practices.

This matter is of extreme urgency with hundreds of federally-protected wild horses in danger of being sold for slaughter in California – a state that has banned the cruel practice of horse slaughter for two decades. We urge you to take prompt action to prevent this pending tragedy and uphold state law.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



**Suzanne Roy**  
Executive Director  
American Wild Horse Campaign



**Jennifer Scarlett, DVM**  
President and CEO  
San Francisco SPCA



**Nancy Perry**  
Senior Vice President, Government Relations  
ASPCA



**Gary Weitzman, DVM, MPH, CAWA**  
President and CEO  
San Diego Humane Society



**Nancy B. McKenney, MNPL, CAWA**  
CEO/President  
Marin Humane



**Cathy Liss**  
President  
Animal Welfare Institute



**Neda M. DeMayo**  
Founder and President  
Return to Freedom