



Key Points

1. Urge lawmakers to:
 - a. *oppose* any provision that would allow the Bureau of Land Management to kill healthy unadopted wild horses and burros;
 - b. *oppose* weakening or eliminating sale restrictions on wild horses and burros, which would allow kill buyers to purchase animals and haul them to slaughter in Canada or Mexico;
 - c. *support* the Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act, which would ban horse slaughter and the transport of horses for slaughter in the United States.
 - d. *support* a congressional mandate that proven, humane solutions be widely implemented including range and water restoration, enabling the BLM to manage wild horses on the range.

2. Effective, humane on-the-range management tools for wild horses and burros do exist and are proven to work. In addition to fertility control, Return to Freedom Wild Horse Conservation advocates for a series of steps as part of its Wild on the Range Campaign.

3. The American people are overwhelmingly opposed to horse slaughter – and equally supportive of protecting wild horses. Polls consistently show that about 80% of Americans from rural to urban communities strongly oppose horse slaughter. The American people will not tolerate the shooting of healthy wild horses and burros that represent such a strong part country’s history and culture.
4. Since 1971, wild horses and burros have lost 15.5 million acres of habitat under the management of the Bureau of Land Management.
5. In 2016, BLM spent only about 4% of its \$80.6 million wild horse program budget on fertility control – compared to 67% for the capture, removal and off-range stockpiling of wild horse. In fact, BLM has never spent more than 4% of its wild horse budget on fertility control.
6. Fertility control is not a cure-all, but the National Academy of Sciences has recommended its use as a key tool for population management and a peer-reviewed study found that BLM could reach its population goals within 12 years if it focused on the fertility control vaccine PZP. At Return to Freedom’s American Wild Horse Sanctuary, we’ve found that PZP to have a 91% efficacy rate (a variety of other projects on and off the range have had similar success). PZP allows us to keep family bands together, and our mares are healthy, happy and living well into their 30s.
7. Wild horses and burros are vastly outnumbered by privately owned livestock on BLM lands by about 37 to 1. Wild horses are restricted to just 9.1 percent of BLM lands, which they must share with livestock. Even on the small amount of land designated as wild horse habitat, BLM allocates the majority of forage to private livestock, not wild horses.



Legislation

*Return to Freedom is actively lobbying on six bills in Congress: the House and Senate versions of the Agriculture appropriations bill, Interior appropriations bill and SAFE Act. Here’s a guide to where each stands. **Key votes are in red.***

WILD HORSE BILLS

Context: RTF and other advocates have long pushed the Bureau of Land Management to implement safe, proven fertility control and other humane solutions for on-the-range

management of wild horses and burros. Instead, BLM has never spent more than 4% of its wild horse program budget on fertility control and has continued cruel, costly roundups that have led to more than 44,000 wild horses and burros captured and placed into short-term corrals and long-term pastures. In past federal appropriations bills, healthy unadopted wild horses and burros have been provided limited protections against euthanasia (shooting) and some restrictions have been placed on their sale. An omnibus spending bill passed this spring that will fund the government until fall included protective language for wild horses but added a provision allowing BLM to transfer wild horses and burros to other federal, state and local government agencies. Some of the language remains a concern but the threat to wild horses grew substantially in May, with the unveiling of the president's Fiscal Year 2018 budget proposal. It would allow BLM to kill horses and sell them without restriction, opening the door to their sale to kill buyers who haul horses to Canada or Mexico for slaughter. Some Western lawmakers, acting under pressure from the livestock industry and other special interests, have long expressed a desire to remove wild horses and burros, by most any means, and are attempting to seize this moment to rid the ranges of wild horses. Horse opponents blame range degradation on wild horses, rarely mentioning the cattle that dramatically outnumber them on even public lands set aside for horses; dishonestly portray wild horses as starving across their ranges; and falsely claim that PZP and other fertility control vaccines have failed despite research that says otherwise and token spending on humane solutions by BLM.

House Fiscal Year 2018 Interior Appropriations Bill (H.R. 3354)

July 12: House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee markup – Bill allows BLM to transfer wild horses and burros to other agencies. It also contains the following protective language: “Appropriations herein made shall not be available for the destruction of healthy, unadopted, wild horses and burros in the care of the Bureau or its contractors or for the sale of wild horses and burros that results in their destruction for processing into commercial products.”

July 18: House Appropriations Committee full committee markup – **On a voice vote (meaning no roll call was taken), the committee approved an amendment by Rep. Chris Stewart, R-Utah, that struck following words from the protective passage: Stewart, R-Utah, that struck following words from the protective passage: “Appropriations herein made shall not be available for the destruction of healthy, unadopted, wild horses and burros in the care of the Bureau or its contractors or for the sale of wild horses and burros that results in their destruction for processing into commercial products.” With that phrase removed, BLM would be able to kill healthy unadopted wild horses and burros. The bill also contains the language allowing BLM to transfer wild horses to other agencies.**

What's next: Date TBD, vote by the full House of Representatives.

Senate Fiscal Year 18 Interior Appropriations Bill (bill not filed)

Date TBD: Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee markup.

Date TBD: Senate Appropriations Committee full committee markup.

Date TBD: Vote by full Senate.

What's next: Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee markup. The subcommittee has yet to file its version of the FY-2018 Interior Appropriations Bill.

HORSE SLAUGHTER BILLS

Context: The last horse slaughter plant in the United States close in 2007. To deter other companies from opening plants, advocates have since 2005 pushed the so-called "horse slaughter defund amendment," which amends the Agriculture Appropriations Bill so that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is prohibited from hiring horsemeat inspectors. This has what served as makeshift ban until such time that horse slaughter opponents achieve their ultimate goal: passing the SAFE Act. The bill would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to deem equine (horses and other members of the *equidae* family) parts to be an unsafe food additive or animal drug, as well as prohibit the knowing sale or transport of equines or equine parts for human consumption. In recent years, more than 100,000 American horses – including an unknown number of wild horses – have been shipped to their deaths.

House Fiscal Year 2018 Agriculture Appropriations Bill (H.R. 3268)

June 28: House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee markup – No language defunding U.S Department of Agriculture inspections included.

July 12: House Appropriations Committee markup — **Reps. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Charlie Dent (R-PA) offered annual amendment blocking the USDA from inspecting horse slaughter facilities. The amendment failed on a 27-25 roll-call vote.**

What's next: Date TBD, vote by the full House of Representatives.

Senate FY-2018 Agriculture Appropriations Bill (S. 1603)

July 18: Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee markup – No language defunding U.S Department of Agriculture inspections included.

July 20: Senate Appropriations Committee markup — **Sens. Tom Udall, D-New Mexico, Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, Chris Coons, D-Delaware, Dianne Feinstein, D-California, Jack Reed, D-Rhode Island, Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Jeanne Shaheen, D-New Hampshire, offered annual amendment blocking the USDA from inspecting horse slaughter facilities. Amendment passed by a voice vote.**

What's next: Date TBD, vote by the full Senate.

Safeguard American Food Exports Act (H.R. 113)

Jan. 3: Reps. Vern Buchanan, R-Florida, Jan Schakowsky, D-Illinois, Ed Royce, R-California, Michelle Lujan Grisham, D-New Mexico and Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon introduced a House version of the SAFE Act. It has since amassed 148 bipartisan co-sponsors.

What's next: The bill has been referred to the Energy and Commerce, as well as the Agriculture Committee.

Safeguard American Food Exports Act (S.1706)

Aug. 2: Sens. Bob Menendez, D-New Jersey, Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, Sheldon Whitehouse, D-Rhode Island, and Susan Collins, R-Maine, re-introduced a Senate version of the SAFE Act.

What's next: The bill has been referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.



Facts about the Bureau of Land Management's Wild Horse & Burro Program

FACT 1: Since 1971, 22.2 million acres of land have been removed as wild horse habitat designation.

- **In 1971**, wild horses and burros roamed on *53.8 million* acres of land, of which *42.4 million* acres were under the BLM's jurisdiction. Herd Areas and Herd Management Areas were created on those public lands managed by the BLM as mandated by Congress with the passing of The Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act.
- **Today**, the BLM manages wild horses and burros in subsets of these Herd Areas, known as Herd Management Areas (HMAs), that comprise *31.6 million* acres, of which *26.9 million* acres are under BLM management. (As of 2017, total number of Herd Management Areas: 177.)

DWINDLING HABITAT

53,800,000: Acres of land on which wild horses were found in 1971.

42,400,000: Acres of BLM land on which wild horses were found in 1971

31,600,000: Acres of federal land on which wild horses found today.

26,900,000: Acres of BLM land on which wild horses are found today.

Wild horse habitat has decreased by 41% since 1971, including a net loss of 15.5 million acres of BLM land from which wild horses have been eliminated.

FACT 2: About four out of every 10 federally protected wild horses and burros live not free on the range, where they belong, but in a government holding facility.

- The Bureau of Land Management estimates that 59,483 wild horses and 13,191 burros are roaming on BLM-managed rangelands in 10 Western states based on the latest data available, compiled as of March 1, 2017.
- As of March 2017, there were approximately 44,952 wild horses and 1,063 burros in government holding facilities (13,234 in short-term holding pens, 32,186 in long-term holding pastures in the Midwest and 595 in eco-sanctuaries).

FACT 3: The BLM intends to reduce the wild horse and burro population down to the level that existed in 1971 when Congress deemed that they were “fast disappearing” and needed to be protected.

- The BLM estimates that there were 25,300 wild horses in 1971 when Congress passed the Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act.
- The BLM has set a national “Appropriate Management Level” (AML) of just 26,715 wild horses and burros. The agency is scheduling roundups to reduce the current estimated population down to this low number. The national AML would leave about 1 horse or burro for every 9,171 acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

DWINDLING POPULATION

2,000,000: Number of wild horses that roamed the West at the end of the 19th century.

25,300: Number of wild horses when 1971 Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act passed

59,483: Current estimated wild horse population

13,191: Current estimated wild burro population

26,715: BLM target wild horses and burro population

< 70,000: Number of federally listed, endangered big horn sheep in the West.

The BLM intends to drive the number of wild horses and burros in the U.S. down to the number that existed in 1971 when Congress passed a law to protect them because, at the time, they were deemed to be "fast disappearing from the American scene."

FACT 4: Wild horses and burros are vastly outnumbered by privately owned cattle and sheep on BLM lands. Wild horses are restricted to just 9.1 percent of BLM lands, which they must share with livestock. Yet even on the small amount of BLM land designated as wild horse habitat, the BLM allocates the majority of forage to private livestock, not wild horses.

- The BLM administers about 245 million acres of public lands (more than any other federal agency). Livestock grazing is authorized on 155 million acres of those lands.

Wild horses are restricted to 26.9 million acres of BLM land.

- Authorized livestock use on BLM lands for 2016 was 12 million Animal Unit Months (AUM's). That's the equivalent of 1 million cow/calf pairs. (1 AUM = 1 horse, 1 cow/calf pair, 5 sheep.) Authorized wild horse use on BLM lands is 320,580 AUMs.

Fact 5: Welfare Ranching is the driving force behind the mass removal of wild horses from public lands. The cattlemen's lobby wants to maintain access to taxpayer-subsidized, commercial livestock grazing on public lands.

- The BLM charges ranchers \$1.87 per AUM. That compares to a 2016 market rate for private land ranching of about \$20 per animal per month.
- A 2015 Center for Biological Diversity study estimated that the costs to U.S. taxpayers for public lands grazing amounted to more than \$1 billion over a decade.

Fact 6: A cost-effective and humane alternative to roundup & removal is available, but it is not being adequately implemented by the BLM.

- A 2013 economic model published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine found that the BLM could attain its management goals within 12 years using fertility control. The study found that using fertility control could save \$8 million at one

Herd Management Area alone. "It stands to reason that such an approach could result in a cost-savings of tens of millions of dollars" if PZP were used throughout BLM lands, rather than removing wild horses from public lands and placing them in holding facilities.

- PZP fertility control has been shown to be effective and safe. As a non-hormonal vaccine, it has minimal effects on behavior.
- BLM is underutilizing PZP and continuing the large-scale and fiscally unsustainable removal of wild horses from public lands in the West. In 2016, BLM used about 67% of its budget spent to roundup, remove and stockpile horses; just 4% spent on fertility control to manage horses on the range.
- BLM's failure to implement PZP adequately resulted in more than 46,700 wild horses and burros warehoused in government holding facilities by the December 2016, costing taxpayers about \$50 million annually to house, feed and care for them.

UNSUSTAINABLE CYCLE OF ROUNDUP, REMOVAL & STOCKPILING

- **21,145:** Number of wild horses removed from the range 2012-16
- **12,572:** Number of wild horses and burros adopted through BLM adoption program 2012-16
- **1,025:** Number of wild horses sold by BLM 2012-16
- **13,234:** Number of wild horses and burros in short-term holding facilities as of March 2017
- **32,186:** Number of wild horses and burros in long-term holding facilities as of March 2017
- **595:** Number of wild horses in eco-sanctuaries as of March 2017
- **46,015:** Total number of wild horses in holding facilities as of March 2017

COSTS

- **\$25,000-\$100,000:** Environmental Impact Statements prior to each roundup and holding facility
- **\$1,000:** Average cost to round up a wild horse
- **\$2.42:** Per day per horse cost in long-term holding (\$28.42 M divided by 32,186 horses divided by 365 days)
- **\$4.35:** Per day per horse cost in short-term holding (\$21.02 M divided by 13,234 horses divided by 365 days)
- **\$135,452:** Per day cost to taxpayers to maintain horses in holding facilities

FY 2016 BUDGET

- **\$28.42 million:** Long term holding costs
- **\$21.01 million:** Short term holding costs
- **\$3.06 million:** Roundup/Removal
- **\$340,000:** Fertility control
- **\$2.25 million:** Monitor HMAs, construct / maintain range projects)
- **\$7.89 million:** Adoption, sales and compliance inspections
- **\$78.298 million:** Total FY 2016 expenditures
- **\$80.555 million:** Total FY 2016 enacted budget

67% of budget spent to roundup, remove and stockpile horses; just 4% spent on fertility control and other measures to manage horses on the range.

Fact 7: The threat of slaughter for human consumption is a danger that is ever-present for mustangs that have been rounded up and removed from the range.

- An average of 127,000 horses were trucked to slaughter plants in Mexico and Canada from 2008-15, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- The terror, trauma and pain that horses endure in transport to slaughter houses and on the slaughter floor – where they have been documented to have their throats cut while they are fully conscious – is the ultimate betrayal of these animals who are our companions and partners in competition, work and recreation. They are the free-roaming descendants of the horses we rode in on.
- The foreign market for horsemeat is driving the sale of U.S. horses for slaughter. Americans do not eat horsemeat.
- Under a 2004 sale authority law, commonly called the “Burns Amendment,” BLM is directed to sell “without limitation” wild horses age 10 and older or younger horses who have not been adopted after three tries. BLM has sold more than 5,900 wild horses and burros since 2005. The 4,100 sold between 2005 and 2010 were sold for an average of just \$17 apiece.
- Although it is the BLM’s policy not to sell or send any wild horses or burros to slaughter, truckloads of these “sale authority” horses are sold from long-term holding facilities.
- The solution to the problem of unwanted horses in the U.S. is not slaughter, but rather responsible breeding and humane euthanasia.

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RTF's Wild on the Range Campaign

A Plan for a Humane, Sustainable Future on the Range for Wild Horses and Burros

The challenge of managing America's wild horses and burros need not be an intractable one. Now is the time to create a proud vision that will ensure for generations to come the freedom, health and well-being of wild horses and burros on the range while saving taxpayers tens of millions of dollars annually.

The Bureau of Land Management manufactured a crisis by ignoring the availability of safe, effective fertility control vaccines and other humane options to control the number of horses and burros on the range as well as habitat restoration that will benefit all wildlife, equids and livestock. The agency uses helicopters to round up horses before trucking them to the government corrals and pastures scattered throughout the Midwest where the BLM houses them at great cost.

For example, in 2016 BLM spent less than 1% of its \$80.6 million budget on fertility control -- compared to 67% for the capture, removal and off-range stockpiling of wild horses. In 2007, by BLM's own estimates, they were short of their population goal by only 1,000 horses, yet the agency did not implement an aggressive fertility control program on the range -- using less than 1% of their budget on fertility control and darting a very small number of mares over the following years.

Consequently, the agency finds itself under increasing pressure from Washington, D.C., to cut the costs of caring for captured wild horses and burros. At the same time, ranchers, other moneyed interests and some Western lawmakers press the BLM to capture and remove even more wild horses and burros from their home ranges.

It is not enough to say "no" to proposals that put the lives of wild horses on the line, though Return to Freedom strongly urges lawmakers to begin by doing so.

Congress should also adopt a pragmatic, multi-pronged – and bipartisan -- approach supporting good range management for livestock and wildlife while providing an equitable allocation of forage and water to our wild horses and burros on designated Herd Management Areas.

A 2013 economic model published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine found that the BLM could attain its management goals within 12 years by investing in just one of the proposed solutions listed above: the judicious use of fertility control. The study found this would save \$8 million at a single Herd Management Area.

The federal government should instead:

- Commit to a long-term holistic plan focused on the importance of maintaining naturally selected family and bonded bands and not just focused on minimizing numbers; humanely managing wild horses and burro population growth on the range, as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences in 2013, using proven, safe PZP fertility control when necessary;
- Increase land and herd stewardship: improve knowledge of herd patterns, herd relationships, relationship to habitat and other wildlife, test DNA not only for Spanish markers but for kinship for health and variability of herd, maintain watershed and springs to benefit all wildlife;
- Revisit the Appropriate Management Level (AML) for wild horses and burros in each Herd Management Area and allocate a more equitable share of the Animal Unit Months to wild horses and burros;
- Manage our shared public lands for all Americans rather than for the benefit of moneyed interests;
- Establish incentives for ranchers who make water available to wild horses and burros and /or reduce or give up their livestock grazing permits so that wild horses and burros can receive a more equitable share of the grazing resources (AUMS) on wild horse and burro Herd Management Areas and Herd Areas;
- Increase partnerships between ranchers, government agencies, sanctuaries and private citizens to manage wild horses and burros on their ranges with the most minimally intrusive practices available, including: the judicious use of PZP, range restoration, water development, fencing out dangerous roads.
- Develop robust eco-tourism and educational opportunities that will foster positive engagement for local communities as well as national interest in public lands, wildlife and wild horses and burros;
- Increase restrictions to the 2005 Sale Authority Amendment, which mandated that all wild horses over the age of 10 years old, and those with three failed adoption attempts, be offered for sale to the highest bidder, without limitation, adding credit checks for adopters, a prohibition against destroying healthy horses and burros, and not removing the protected status of adopted animals;
- Return to suitable state and federal rangelands non-reproducing wild horses and burros stockpiled in short-term holding pens and long-term holding ranches;
- Any removals of horses should:
 - not exceed adoption demand from qualified adopters;

- include a well-balanced conservation plan so as to minimize intrusion on natural generational herd growth and survival;
- use bait and water trapping whenever possible
- focus on relocating multiple intact family and bachelor bands that inhabit a region.



Horse Slaughter Background Information

The 2007 shuttering of the last horse slaughterhouse in the United States has done nothing to keep American horses and burros from foreign killing floors or decrease the risk to human health from eating horsemeat.

An average of 127,000 horses were trucked to their deaths in Mexico and Canada from 2008-15, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Once beyond our borders and the USDA regulations, horses can face brutal and terrifying deaths in antiquated facilities.

Congress has effectively banned horse slaughter by defunding USDA inspector positions needed to conduct legally required inspections. No lasting ban on horse slaughter has been signed into law, however.

Should federal meat inspector funding be reinstated, protections for horses would be poor at best. Some states, like California and Texas, have horse slaughter and horse meat sale bans, but others require only that horsemeat be labeled.

And while the American public has shown no taste for horsemeat and in surveys expresses strong opposition to the slaughter of horses, companies have applied to open slaughterhouses in recent years to meet demand in countries that include Mexico, Japan, France and Belgium. Because American horses are not raised to be eaten, they frequently are given medications banned for human consumption by the USDA and European Union.

No regulations require the sharing of information about substances ingested by a horse up for auction. There, horses are often purchased by "kill" buyers with the intent on sending them to slaughter. More than 92% of these exported horses are in "good" condition, according to the USDA.

You can help spare American horses by joining Return to Freedom Wild Horse Conservation in urging Congress to pass the bipartisan Safeguard American Foods Exports Act (H.R. 113 and S.1706).

This legislation would amend the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to deem horses and other members of the *equidae* family an unsafe food additive. The SAFE Act would also ban the knowing sale or transport of equines or equine parts in interstate or foreign commerce for purposes of human consumption.

Doing so will reduce health risks to human beings and prevent the suffering of horses.