



RESOLUTION 2018-03
IMPACT AND MANAGEMENT OF WILD HORSES AND BURROS

Whereas, the Western States Land Commissioners Association (WSLCA) and its member states manage over 515 million acres of trust lands and minerals that are interspersed with federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM); and

Whereas, members of WSLCA have state constitutional mandates to manage millions of acres of lands for economic development, public education, conservation, recreation, and other public purposes provided by state law; and

Whereas, WSLCA member states lease state trust lands for grazing and wildlife management purposes; and

Whereas, WSLCA member states manage their grazing lands for the long term health of the range and sustainability of forage resources; and

Whereas, millions of acres of trust lands are interspersed with federal lands in Western states where wild horse and burro populations occur; and

Whereas, wild horses and burros are protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971; and

Whereas, according to the BLM, holding capacity of federal lands for wild horses is 27,000 horses; and

Whereas, current wild horse populations on federal lands exceeds 83,000 horses with the population doubling every 4 years; and

Whereas, the BLM is already housing 46,000 horses in long-term facilities which are now at capacity; and

Whereas, the population crisis of wild horses results in the trespass of thousands of wild horses on state trust lands which cause environmental damage, reduce grazing capacity for leased lands, and reduces funding for public education; and

Whereas, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-31) required the BLM to produce the “Report to Congress: Management Options for a Sustainable Wild Horse and Burro Program” in April of 2018 which provided four policy options for Congress to consider with Option IV as the Secretary’s preferred alternative; and

Whereas, the Secretary’s preferred alternative calls for the sterilization of 18,000 male and female horses per year returning horses to the range and not achieving Appropriate Management Levels until 2030; and

Whereas, returning sterilized horses to the range will not resolve trespass of wild horses on state trust lands and will not reduce the numbers of wild horses in time to stop ongoing rangeland damages and allow for natural rehabilitation of state trust lands; and

Whereas, the Secretary has proposed an Option II that would require large scale removal of wild horses which would achieve Appropriate Management Levels in 10 years with large numbers of wild horses being permanently and immediately removed and stored in off range facilities; and

Whereas, state trust land managers have no ability to herd, round up, or manage wild horses under current law:

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT :

1. The U.S. Congress must approve and fund a wild horse management strategy that will require the BLM to permanently remove large numbers of wild horses from the range with removal of trespass animals on state trust lands as a priority.

Adopted this 11th day of July, 2018.


Harry Birdwell, President
WSLCA


Bridget Hill, Secretary
WSLCA