

Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
110th Congress
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

March 19, 2007

Honorable Nick J. Rahall and Committee Members:

I am writing to you concerning the very real and current crisis wild burros now face on public lands and am pleading for your intervention.

This crisis stretches Nationally, which is detailed in the enclosed report titled, Wild Burros of the West, A Critical Analysis of the Current Status of Wild Burros on Public Lands – 2006, for purposes of review and increasing awareness of the management strategies that are significantly impacting wild burros and their habitat towards extinction.

In summary, the cumulative impacts Nationwide have resulted in the loss of habitat totaling over five million acres or almost 50% of their former range. The current targeted “appropriate” population level for the entire United States is approximately 2,700 wild burros, less than what use to be managed in Southern California alone. Southern California has had a 90% reduction in both habitat and population since 1980 while the entire state of California will manage for 345 burros or less. *That’s 345 wild burros for the entire state of California!*

While this National crisis must be addressed, there is an urgent matter that must be brought to the Committees attention and requires immediate intercession, the California Clark Mountain burros. The Bureau of Land Management has taken the majority of California’s most historic herd from their range and ***it must be stopped NOW*** or they will soon vanish forever.

These burros have lived in an isolated region of California for at least two hundred years and have not interbred with any other herds. Because of this, results of genetic tests conducted for the Bureau of Land Management stated that the Clark Mountain burros were identified as the most genetically unique wild burro herd of all burro herds tested in the West and therefore, within the United States.

In the environmental assessment that determined the burros’ removals, BLM stated that the removal of the Clark Mountain burros would result in *“this species.....and their unique genetic characteristics being permanently lost.* “ Yet, they still issued a decision to eradicate them.

The land use plan that they used to “authorize” these removals, the NEMO Amendment, contained a transfer by BLM of a critical water source to National Park Service, who initially agreed to let the burros to continue to use it. However, when that agreement expired, NPS refused to renew it or even try to find an alternative plan, even when citizens volunteered free labor and supplies to pipe the water back in for the burros.

Now the majority of this historic herd sits in the Ridgecrest holding facilities in California waiting final processing which will result in the assurance of this unique and distinct populations extinction.

Therefore, I am requesting your urgent intervention in this crisis. Please put a halt to the dispersing of the ninety-six plus Clark Mountain burros now being held in the BLM Ridgecrest holding facility and prevent the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service or any other agency from removing the remaining handful of this historic herd from their home range and finalizing their extinction.

Please read the report, which examines both the Clark Mountain burros that were the impetus for the report, as well as the totality of National management strategies that must be addressed if wild burros are to survive for future generations.

I deeply appreciate your attention to this matter and am looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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