

Assemblyman Bill Emerson
California State Capitol
Room 4158
Sacramento, CA 95814

March 9, 2007

RE: Extinction of California Burros

Dear Assemblymen Emerson:

While currently a resident of Las Vegas, Nevada, I grew up in the Southern California deserts, attended Death Valley High School, own property in Inyo County and still frequent these areas because they were my first home.

I am writing to you regarding the most serious and critical status of the few remaining wild burros left in California, as well as to ask for your intervention in the recently issued decision by the Bureau of Land Management to facilitate the extinction of the Clark Mountain burros, which are, according to BLM's own reports, the only one of their kind in the world.

To summarize the current crises, at the time of passage of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan in 1980, there were 19 recognized historic herd areas for burro use, 3.5 million acres of habitat and 2,747 wild burros. Today, this same area only has 2 remaining herds, less than 300,000 acres of habitat and an "approved population" of 229 wild burros. This is a destruction of 90% of both the population and habitat for wild burros. Outside of this area, only one other herd has been "approved", bringing the total for the entire state of California to merely 345.

A report is being released, Wild Burros of the West, A Critical Analysis of the Current Status of Wild Burros on Public Lands- 2006, devotes a section to the critical state of the remaining wild burros in California, which has been included for your information.

I have enclosed this report, intending to raise awareness of how critical the situation has become for wild burros, not only in California, but throughout the West, and hopefully to inspire you to take a stand and demonstrate strong leadership about this issue.

While all wild burros are currently facing a habitat and population crisis, none is more desperate than the Clark Mountain burros in Southern California.

By BLM's own reports, due to their remote location for the last two hundred years, genetic variances have developed which have resulted in unique characteristics found nowhere else in the world. Despite BLM's own admissions, the majority of this herd is now sitting in pens at the BLM Ridgecrest Field Office awaiting preparation for adoption or unconditional sale resulting in their permanent extinction.

The remaining handful still present on their historic range are at terrible risk due to the unabashed policy of the National Park Service to consider shooting wild burros a "humane disposal method", citing the only reason as "We don't manage for wild horses and burros".

Please read, review and consider the information contained in this report carefully, as it's impacts are expected to create the needed public awareness necessary to demand accountability and reparations for what has been done to this most-loved California and Western icon.

In addition to federal laws mandating wild burro protection, the State of California's Fish and Game Code-4600, also mandates that wild burros on California land will be protected from harassment, injury and death.

I therefore urge you to refuse to allow this illegal expatriation to continue and halt the extinction of the wild free-roaming Clark Mountain burros of California by demanding the BLM comply with both their own regulations, California State Law as well as the Laws of our Nation.

Please stop Ridgecrest from dispersing the Clark Mountain burros, demand a re-evaluation of land use plans that would allow for their continued preservation within their historic home, insist that the current management strategies of maintaining only 345 burros is unacceptable, and save a significant piece of both California's and our Nations history.

I would appreciate a response as well as any comments or solutions you are willing to share.

Sincerely,

NAME/ADDRESS REMOVED