

WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS PROTECTION ACT OF 2022

October 2022

On Oct. 5, 2022, House Natural Resources Committee Chair Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) introduced the bipartisan Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Protection Act of 2022 with Rep. David Schweikert (R-Ariz), Rep. Dina Titus (D-Nev.), Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), Rep. Joe Neguse (D-Colo.), and Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) to protect wild horses and burros from slaughter and ensure their humane management.

GROWING WILD HORSE AND BURRO POPULATIONS BRING NEW CHALLENGES.

Congress passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act in 1971 to recognize these quintessentially American creatures as “living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West.” At the time, populations were on the decline, with only 17,000 estimated horses left on the range. The law established unique federal protections for horses and burros to support healthy populations while also maintaining the health of Western lands.

Today, rapidly growing populations and a changing climate create major challenges for managing both these creatures and public lands. Unfortunately, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – the federal agency tasked with managing wild horses and burros – has prioritized removal practices over humane, on-range management, resulting in the death or injury of thousands of horses over the last decade.



SINCE THE 1970S, WILD HORSE POPULATIONS ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE MORE THAN QUADRUPLED TO AT LEAST 82,000 ANIMALS ON THE RANGE.

HOW WILL THE WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS PROTECTION ACT OF 2022 HELP?

The bill amends the 1971 law to provide much-needed reforms to wild horse and burro management. These reforms will transition BLM away from dangerous and fiscally irresponsible management strategies towards humane on-range management that supports jobs and local economies. By emphasizing the use of fertility control—a far more effective and less expensive form of management—the bill will keep horses in the wild and save taxpayer dollars by reducing the number of horses sent to holding facilities.

The Act promotes humane management strategies, increases transparency and good government, protects wild horses and burros from slaughter, and promotes partnerships with nonprofit organizations and veterans. More specifically, the Act will:

- Prohibit the slaughter of wild horses and burros and repeal the “Burns Amendment.”
- Protect wild horses and burros from being killed or destroyed as a population management tool.
- Require the use of humane, minimally invasive, scientifically proven fertility control and prioritize humane management strategies.
- Require creation and enforcement of regulations to ensure animal welfare for all aspects of wild horse and burro handling and management.
- Emphasize partnerships with veterans and nonprofits to implement fertility control vaccine programs.
- Prohibit cash incentives for adopting a wild horse or burro, prohibit adopters from sending animals to slaughter, and require compliance checks for adopters.
- Require the Secretary of the Interior to track and report the number of wild horses or burros killed or injured during a roundup in a publicly available online database.

The bill is supported by the American Wild Horse Campaign, Veterans for Mustangs, and the Animal Welfare Institute.