

March 2, 2007

U.S. Congresswoman Shelley Berkley  
439 Cannon House Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: BLM's Wild Horse Budget

Dear Congresswoman Berkley,

The State of Nevada remains seriously concerned with the proper management of wild horses and burros that inhabit the federal lands throughout our State. Nevada continues to be the primary stakeholder in the national wild horse program with approximately 60% of the wild horses that populate the United States.

Management of wild horses and burros has significant influence on Nevada's environmental, economical and cultural resources. While the Wild Horse and Burro Act has been in effect since 1971, it hasn't been until recent years that the Bureau of Land Management determined appropriate management levels and implemented gathers to herd numbers that will achieve a thriving natural ecological balance as required by law. This has been a tremendous effort on the part of the BLM, striving for the health of the horses and the rangelands they occupy. The current appropriate management level (AML) has been achieved with recent gathers completed in southern Nevada.

Presently, Nevada hosts approximately 14,000 of the 28,500 wild horses in the United States. Nevada, in the past, hosted approximately 32,000 Wild Horses prior to the intensive management efforts of the Bureau of Land Management in the past five years. In order to sustain these reduced numbers, the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service must have the funding and resources to manage and gather our herds' annual recruitment rates of 18 to 20 percent each year.

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It is our understanding that there has been a cut to the BLM's wild horse program of \$4.8 million dollars. This will be cut directly from the resources to gather excess wild horses. Elimination of gathers in the 11 western states will increase the nation's population to 36,000 in the next two years.

We strongly encourage Congress to fully fund and direct the Bureau of Land Management to maintain the necessary gathers to best manage Wild Horses and our public lands. Failure to continue these gathers will accelerate herd numbers to the detriment of the animals and their habitat. It has been estimated that a 2 year delay in this program could create a cost of over five times the proposed budget cuts of \$4.8 million dollars this year to correct the situation to our present accomplishments.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

CATHERINE BARCOMB  
Administrator

cc: Governor Jim Gibbons  
Steve Robinson, Deputy Chief of Staff  
Allen Biaggi, Director, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Ron Wenker, Director, Nevada BLM