



## NATIONAL HORSE & BURRO RANGELAND MANAGEMENT COALITION

*Advocating for commonsense, ecologically-sound approaches to managing horses and burros  
to promote healthy wildlife and rangelands for future generations*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Statement on BLM's Wild Horse & Burro Management Program FY2018 Budget Request**

President Trump's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Proposal calls for the removal of appropriations language that restricts the BLM from using all management options authorized under the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, as amended. The President's request implements a September 2016 recommendation of the National Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board, an independent federal advisory committee representing broad stakeholder interests.

The National Horse & Burro Rangeland Management Coalition supports the Administration's appropriations request to provide necessary flexibility for BLM to manage wild horses and burros. The Coalition [supported the Advisory Board's recommendation](#) and called for the removal of the appropriations language in its [2017 Transition Document](#). The Coalition acknowledges the removal of the management restrictions as a critical step to ensure wild horses and burros can continue to thrive alongside our native wildlife on healthy public rangelands.

BLM is currently burdened with caring for more than 45,000 un-adopted wild horses and burros in holding facilities, costing taxpayers nearly \$50 million per year. On-range populations of wild horses and burros continue to increase, with the March 2017 report indicating a population of 73,000 individuals—well above the ecologically-based population objective of less than 27,000. The already limited number of on-range gathers conducted by BLM should not be reduced to lower the cost of the program.

Adoption demand is not high enough to match the on-range population growth rates. Limited fertility control efforts are not effective in reducing populations. The financial burden of housing thousands of horses and burros has restricted the agency's ability to manage horse and burro populations on the rangelands—and as a result, the health of those rangelands continues to decline, with negative implications for native wildlife, the health of the horses and burros, and other multiple-uses of our country's rangelands.

Removal of the restricting appropriations language, combined with increased gather and removal efforts, will help ensure healthy rangelands for future generations to come. Healthy rangelands allow native wildlife to thrive, livestock to graze to support local communities, wild horses and burros to live healthy lives, and water quantity and quality to be sustained. Healthy rangelands are essential to the Western way of life. Removal of the appropriations language removes roadblocks to the effective management of on-range populations of wild horses and burros.

Congress must now act to remove the restrictive appropriations language, providing the tools necessary for BLM to meet the obligations of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act and manage wild horses and burros in a "thriving natural ecological balance."

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*The National Horse & Burro Rangeland Management Coalition includes more than 18 national organizations, encompassing a wide range of sportsmen, livestock grower, state and local government, wildlife, and land conservation organizations, and professional societies. Collectively, we represent over 10 million Americans and 6,000 local governments, and focus on commonsense, ecologically-sound approaches to managing horses and burros to promote healthy wildlife and rangelands for future generations.*

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American Farm Bureau Federation • American Sheep Industry Association • Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Masters of Foxhounds Association • Mule Deer Foundation • National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Association of Counties • National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association • National Rifle Association • National Wildlife Refuge Association  
Public Lands Council • Public Lands Foundation • Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation • Safari Club International  
Society for Range Management • The Wildlife Society • Wild Sheep Foundation

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