

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

RESOLUTION 1

Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse and Burro Management



WHEREAS, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages wild horses and burros under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (Act) which directs BLM to remove excess wild horses and burros from the range to sustain the health and productivity of public lands; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences in 2013 stated “Evidence suggests that horse populations are growing by 15 to 20 percent each year, a level that is unsustainable for maintaining healthy horse populations as well as healthy ecosystems.” In March 2017, BLM estimated 73,000 horses and burros on public rangelands yet the Appropriate Management Level (AML) is below 27,000 and nearly 50,000 animals are in holding facilities. The cost of BLM’s Wild Horse and Burro (WHB) Program has risen from \$36.2 million in 2008 to \$80.4 million in 2017 with most spent on care of excess animals in off-range facilities; and

WHEREAS, the removal of restrictive BLM budget appropriations language will allow the WHB Program to be more effective in achieving horse and burro numbers at AML and ensure healthy rangelands and restoration of critical riparian areas and spring sources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

- Supports the Administration’s Fiscal Year 2018 budget proposal that calls for the removal of past appropriations language that restricts the BLM from using all management tools provided by the Act, as amended and acknowledges this critical step to attain “a thriving ecological balance” with healthy wildlife populations and public rangelands.
- Will collaborate with Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and others to inform key members of Congress about the unsustainability of the BLM’s current wild horse and burro management program.
- Urges the BLM to develop an action plan, using all management tools available as authorized under the Act, to remove excess horses and burros (including animals that exist outside of established herd management areas), from public rangelands as soon as possible.

Adopted in Convention
Vail, Colorado
July 11, 2017