



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

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October 6, 2008

Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

At the recent Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' 2008 Annual Meeting held in Saratoga Springs, New York, the members reaffirmed our support of the Bureau of Land Management's authority to maintain horse and burro populations at appropriate management levels pursuant to the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (Act) and subsequent amendments to that Act. This authority to remove horses and burros to achieve the established appropriate management levels is critical with respect to minimizing adverse impacts to wildlife populations and their habitats. However, we understand that the BLM cannot continue current removal and holding practices under existing and projected budgets. The high cost of keeping horses and burros in holding facilities is preventing the agency from removing excess animals to achieve appropriate management levels. As such, horse and burro populations throughout the western states are exceeding appropriate management levels, which will lead to devastating impacts to wild horse and burro populations and wildlife resources.

The Association and states believe it's imperative that the BLM have the ability and support to exercise their legal authority, pursuant to the 2004 amendment to the Act, in order to reduce the cost of holding excess animals and redirect their limited funding to necessary removals. Thank you, in advance, for considering our position on this matter.

Sincerely,

Rex Amack
President

cc: State Fish and Wildlife Directors
John Kennedy, Chair, AFWA Federal and Tribal Relations Committee
Jim Caswell, Director, Bureau of Land Management

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