

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

RESOLUTION



MANAGEMENT OF WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS

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 and continues to face a number of difficult challenges in the Wild Horse and Burro Program: and

WHEREAS, there are about 33,000 wild horses and burros roaming on BLM-managed lands in 10 western states - a population that exceeds the appropriate management level by some 5,700 animals and there are over 29,500 wild horses and burros that have been removed from the public rangelands that are being fed and cared for at both short-term (corral) and long-term (pasture) holding facilities; and

WHEREAS, in the current fiscal year (2008), holding costs will exceed \$26 million, accounting for three-fourths of the fiscal year appropriation to the BLM of about \$37 million – a level of funding not sufficient to support summer removals from the range while maintaining lifetime holding for older unadopted animals; and

WHEREAS, the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, (Public Law 92-195) §1333 states that where the Secretary of the Interior determines that an overpopulation exists on a given area of the public lands and that action is necessary to remove excess animals, he shall immediately remove excess animals from the range so as to achieve appropriate management levels; and such action shall be taken until all excess animals have been removed so as to restore a thriving natural ecological balance to the range, and protect the range from the deterioration associated with overpopulation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies requests that the Secretary of the Interior direct the BLM to follow the legal authority set forth in Section 1333(2)(iv)(C) of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, (Public Law 92-195) and that the Congress support this direction.