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Say No to Federal Funding for Wild Horse Salazoos!

CHICAGO, (EWA) – The funding testimony for the planned sanctuaries dubbed by wild horse supporters as “Salazoos” outlined last October by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, will be heard by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural resources on March 3, at 10am (Room SD-366).

The outcome of the testimony will decide if our wild horses belong on their western public lands or in “zoos” in the East and Midwest and whether the BLM will commit millions upon millions of future dollars to warehouse wild horses and burros that would otherwise live without cost to the taxpayers in their natural habitat where they have lived for centuries.

The requested funding would increase the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) budget by \$42M to purchase one of the seven planned “Salazoos.” The Equine Welfare Alliance (EWA) and its over 100 member organizations, Animal Law Coalition, The Cloud Foundation and numerous Mustang advocate and welfare organizations are vehemently opposed to increased funding for the BLM for this incredible financial sinkhole.

America already has a management program in place for our wild equines. It’s called the 1971 Free Roaming Wild Horse and Burro Act. It was inspired by a heroic Nevada woman, Velma Johnston, who as “Wild Horse Annie” gave these horses a sanctuary BLM has been trying to destroy ever since it was passed.

A management program for wild horses and burros on public land has yet to be proposed by the BLM or DOI that is compatible with current law. Their answer is to remove wild horses from the land, permit grazing by millions of cattle at below market rates and move our horses to a zoo like setting far from their home. In fact, the BLM was given appropriations to care for the wild horses in holding pens but has appeared to use the funding to round-up more horses. When citizens complained, they were denied access as armed guards prevented them from even viewing horses in captivity.

With no viable management plan in place, it is a disgrace and waste of critical tax payer dollars to increase funding to yet another mismanaged program. The 1971 law calls for wild horses and burros

to be managed on their public lands - not in holding pens and not in zoos.

The BLM spent approximately \$2M gathering a mere 2,000 animals at its Calico wildlife management area, a cost of \$1,000 per horse. Once in holding, the animals will each cost the government approximately \$500 per year to warehouse. Worse, the government charges ranchers only about 20 cents of every dollar that program costs taxpayers. "The Salazoo plan is yet another raid on the public funds by special interests", says EWA's John Holland.

BLM has spent more than \$2 million in 2009 on a firm that stampedes wild horses with a roaring helicopter. At the Calico Nevada round-up, more than 98 have died as a result, including unborn foals and two babies who lost their hooves after a multi-mile run of terror.

The wild horses and burros represent a mere .05% of animals grazing on public lands. When the 1971 law was passed, wild horses were present on 54 million acres. Since then, over 200,000 horses have been removed along with 22 million acres of public land. Many herds have been zeroed out leaving public land available to return wild horses to their land. Congress should replace the lost acres with good grazing land for the animals BLM wants to place in its Salazoos.

The livestock grazing on public lands alone outnumber the wild horses and burros by over 200 to 1 and are subsidized by taxpayers to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Neither the BLM nor DOI has yet to explain how millions of privately owned livestock are sustainable or how neither agency can find room on the 262 million acres of public land it manages for less than 50,000 wild horses and burros. Neither has explained why the wild horses and burros are being blamed and removed for range degradation when the government GAO studies reflect the livestock are ruining the ranges.

The EWA and ALC call on Congress to deny additional funding and specifically defund wild horse and burro round-ups until the DOI and BLM can provide independent current range population counts, current range assessments and a viable management plan that upholds the 1971 law.

Both Sen. Mary Landrieu and Sen. Barbara Boxer have posed serious questions to the BLM on its management practices. Those questions should be answered immediately with facts, not spin.

Additional details on defunding the BLM for "Salazoos" can be found at [Animal Law Coalition, article number 1188](#).

The Equine Welfare Alliance is a dues free, umbrella organization with over 100 member organizations. The organization focuses its efforts on the welfare of all equines and the preservation of wild equids.

www.equinewelfarealliance.org

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