

Archery Trade Association • American Sportfishing Association
Boone and Crockett Club • Bowhunting Preservation Alliance
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation • Conservation Force
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Izaak Walton League of America • Foundation for North American Wild Sheep
North American Grouse Partnership • Safari Club International
U. S. Sportsmen's Alliance • Wildlife Management Institute

May 11, 2005

Honorable Jerry Lewis, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable David Obey, Ranking Democrat
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lewis and Congressman Obey:

The organizations listed above represent millions of America's hunter and angler conservationists. We write to express our opposition to an amendment anticipated to be offered to the FY2006 Interior and Related Agencies appropriations bill that would block implementation of Bureau of Land Management sales authority for wild horses and burros.

The Wild Horses and Burros Act, enacted in 1971, always made explicit that wild horses and burros would be managed to the "appropriate management level". It recognizes that horses and burros would have to exist within the multiple use frameworks that have controlled the management of public lands by law since 1960 and by practice since the turn of the last century. The American public is firmly committed to the principle of multiple use of public lands. Multiple use of public lands is good for habitat, good for wildlife and good for hunting, fishing and other types of recreation.

The Wild Horses and Burros Act contemplates adoption as the primary method of control, but as you know, this has been unable to keep up with population growth. This year for example, 8400 horses need to be removed from the public habitat in order to reach the appropriate level.

The Bureau of Land Management sales authority enacted in the FY2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act has effect only if horses aren't adopted according to standards in the law. BLM is committed to using the authority to only sell horses to buyers who desire to provide a home for the horses (approximately 2000 horses thus far). These sales would not have occurred without the new authority enacted last year.

We sincerely urge rejection of any amendment that would weaken or vitiate this sales authority. Sustained stewardship of our public lands requires appropriate management of wild horses and burros which the anticipated amendment would constrain.

Thank you for your attention to our concern.