

Whereas: The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) reported out this year with *Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse And Burro Program - A Way Forward*;

And whereas: The NAS report finds that: When equine populations self-limit through competition for forage, many animals die from starvation;

And whereas: horse population self-limitation will put intense grazing pressure on rangeland vegetation, wildlife habitats, and ecosystems that will degrade rangelands, transitioning many areas across an irreversible ecological threshold to diminished habitat for future horse herds and other animals with fewer ecosystem services, nonfunctional riparian areas, and increased soil erosion;

And whereas: intense grazing pressure on rangeland vegetation and ecosystems is not consistent with a "thriving natural ecological balance";

And whereas the result of current wild horse and burro management is inconsistent with the Society for Range Management (SRM) vision of productive sustainable rangeland ecosystems;

And whereas: the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (FS) have been unable to manage for sustainable horse population levels;

And whereas: the BLM expects current drought conditions and population levels greatly in excess of appropriate management level (AML) to result soon in a substantial number of horses dying from thirst and starvation;

And whereas: the Nation has so far been unable to agree about public lands horse management that sustains a thriving natural ecological balance in herd management areas;

And whereas: the NAS report finds that: "Resolving conflicts with polarized values and opinions regarding land management rests on the principles of transparency and community-based public participation and engagement in decision-making;"

Be it therefore resolved: the SRM strongly encourages the BLM, FS, and Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Committee to conduct a transparent process of public participation, with visits to imperiled herd management areas, to achieve consensus through collaboration prior to and/or during the predicted die-off events to make decisions that have not been politically feasible in decades of severe but less drastic circumstances. A long-term solution from this collaboration must be scientifically based, ecologically sustainable, legally supported, and fiscally achievable.

Directed to:

USDI BLM Washington Office

USDA FS Washington Office

Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Committee