

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 14, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chair
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies Appropriations

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chair
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chair Merkley, Ranking Member Murkowski, Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chair Pingree, Ranking Member Joyce:

As you work to complete the final Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) spending bill, we write to thank you for including \$11 million in dedicated funding for the implementation of humane, proven, and reversible immunocontraceptive vaccines in the House and Senate Interior Appropriations bills for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wild Horse and Burro (WHB) Program, and we urge you to maintain this funding in the final FY22 spending bill.

This funding is critical for BLM to implement scientifically supported fertility control to ensure an effective and sustainable herd management strategy. Presently, the BLM WHB Program spends less than one percent of its budget implementing fertility control, instead pursuing a fiscally irresponsible, ineffective, and injurious approach of removing horses and keeping them indefinitely in holding facilities. We remain concerned about BLM's May 2020 strategy, which called for mass removals of wild horses and burros from the range, including 20,000 next year alone. Further, as a recent *New York Times* exposé revealed, horses and burros that leave the holding system through the Adoption Incentive Program are at risk of slaughter.

We also thank your Committees for extending critical protections for wild horses and burros from commercial destruction and mass lethal control. In order to further the Committees' efforts to support humane management in the WHB Program, we urge you to incorporate in the final conference report other key aspects of the House and Senate Interior reports, as well as language previously requested by 42 Representatives and 11 Senators. Namely, we urge you to include clear directives for the BLM to:

- Implement reversible immunocontraceptive vaccines (similar to the House report and previously requested language).
- Strengthen adoption contracts to better protect wild horses and burros in the Adoption Incentive Program from slaughter (similar to the House report).
- Develop public-private partnerships for the implementation of humane, proven, and reversible immunocontraceptive fertility control programs (similar to the House report and previously requested language).
- Evaluate Herd Management Areas where wild horses or burros could be relocated to keep these animals on the range and out of costly holding facilities (similar to the House report).
- Brief the Committees with details about the agency's plans for FY22 activities, including its strategy for implementing a vaccination program, within 45 days of enactment and quarterly thereafter (similar to the Senate and House reports).

We believe that these directives will bring much-needed positive change to the WHB Program. Additionally, we encourage the Committees to bolster the House report language by explicitly calling for an Office of Inspector General investigation of the Adoption Incentive Program.

We deeply appreciate your Committees' work to ensure that our nation's wild horses and burros are managed humanely and effectively. Thank you for your dedication to this important animal welfare issue and your recognition of the need to preserve America's iconic wild herds. We welcome the opportunity to work further with you as you finalize the FY22 spending package.

Sincerely,



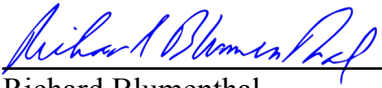
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



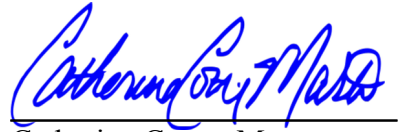
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



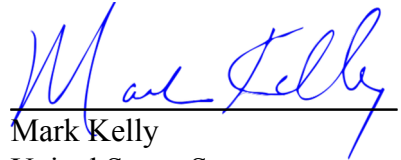
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



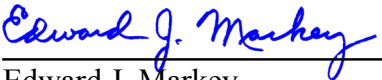
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



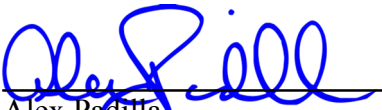
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
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Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



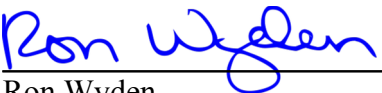
Jacky Rosen
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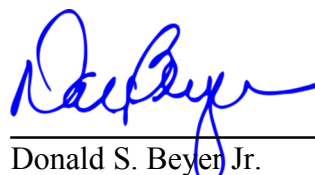
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



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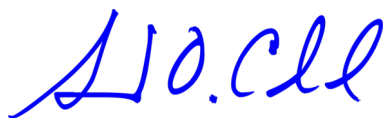
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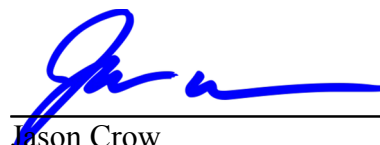
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Family Support



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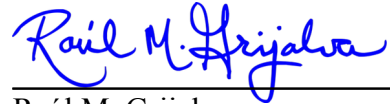
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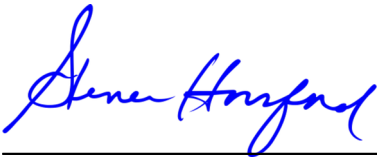
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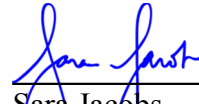
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Chair, Committee on Natural
Resources



Steven Horsford
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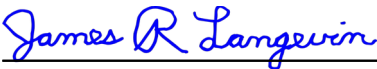
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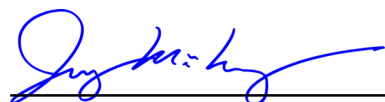
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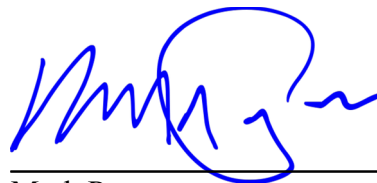
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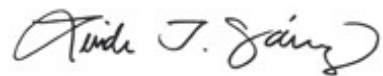
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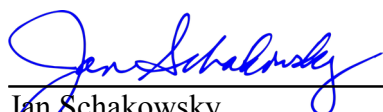
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Marilyn Strickland
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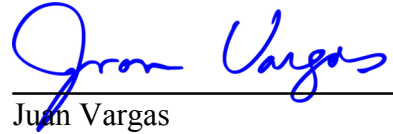
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