

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Vicki Christiansen
Chief, U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue and Chief Christiansen:

We are writing to express our concern with the U.S. Forest Service's plan to sell wild horses from the Devil's Garden Plateau Wild Horse Territory in Northern California without restrictions on slaughter.

It is our understanding the Forest Service intends to sell some of these rounded-up wild horses without such restrictions—for as little as \$1 per horse—potentially starting this month. We are deeply troubled by this proposal as it represents a severe abdication of the government's responsibility to manage these federally-protected horses humanely.

The Devil's Garden Plateau Wild Horse Territory, administered by the Modoc National Forest, is home to California's largest herd of wild horses, and represents a significant tourism draw to the region. More importantly, these horses are beloved icons in the country, and Americans overwhelmingly oppose horse slaughter. The Forest Service's proposal would put wild horses at risk of being killed for food, and goes against California's existing law prohibiting the sale or transfer of horses for human consumption (California Penal Code § 598c).

Congress's intent on this matter is abundantly clear. Through annual Department of the Interior appropriations legislation, Congress has passed unambiguous language protecting wild horses from destruction for commercial purposes. To our knowledge, the Forest Service has never attempted to sell wild horses under its authority without restrictions on slaughter. Rather, the agency has abided by the Interior appropriations language and Congress's clear position regarding the humane and appropriate management of federally-protected wild horses.

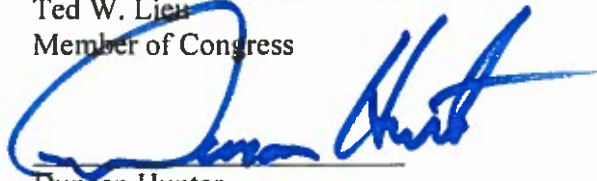
The process of slaughter presents serious welfare concerns as horses are typically transported extremely long distances in crowded trailers without food, water, or rest. Once at the slaughterhouse, horses, with their unique physiology and strong fight-or-flight reflex, may endure repeated blows before being rendered unconscious and killed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture itself documented appalling conditions and abuse when horse slaughter facilities operated on U.S. soil. Animal welfare concerns aside, ensuring consistency between how our federal agencies manage wild horses is paramount.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



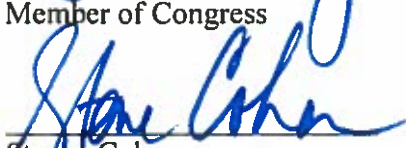
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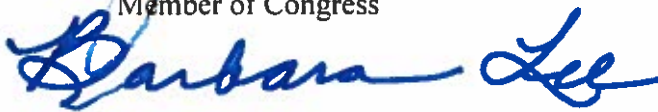
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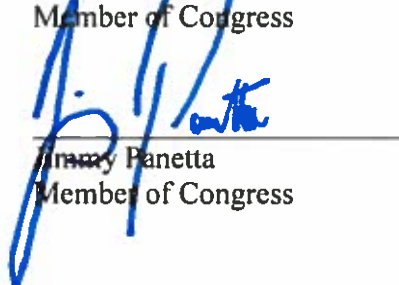
Barbara Lee
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Jamie Raskin
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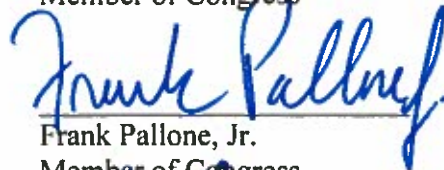
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



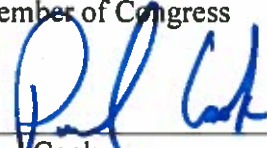
Salud Carbajal
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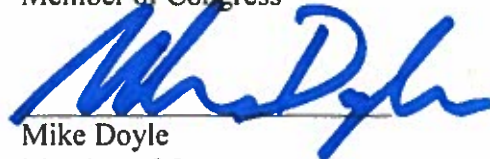
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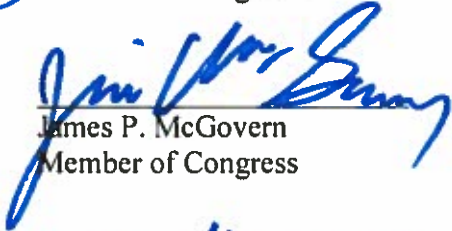
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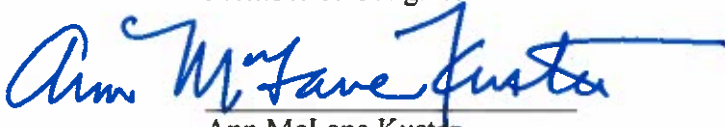
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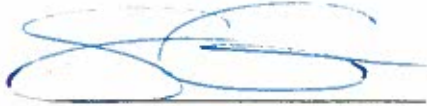
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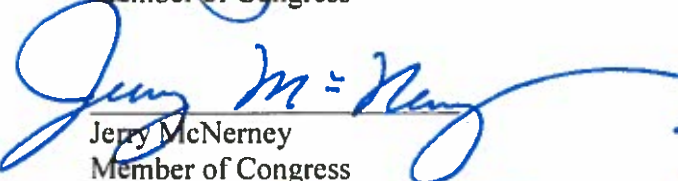
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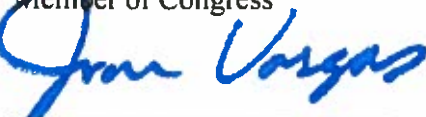

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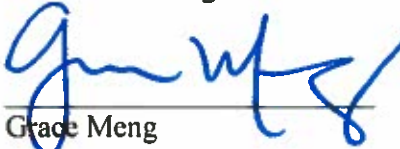

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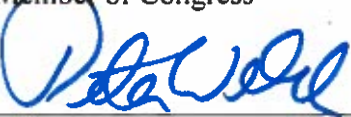

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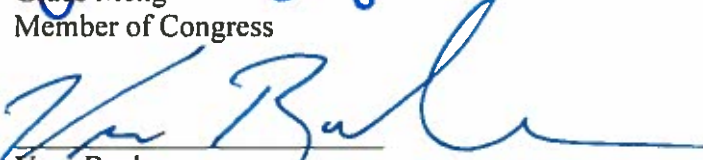

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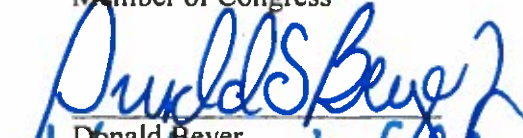

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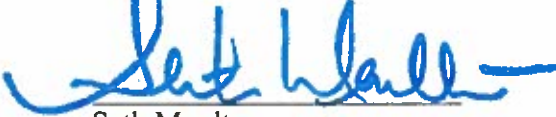

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