

American Sportfishing Association \* Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies \* Backcountry Hunters & Anglers  
Bear Trust International \* Boone and Crockett Club \* Campfire Club of America \* Congressional Sportsmen's  
Foundation \* Conservation Force \* Ducks Unlimited \* Mule Deer Foundation \* National Rifle Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation \* National Trappers Association \* National Wild Turkey Federation \* North  
American Bear Foundation \* Public Lands Foundation \* Quality Deer Management Association \* Rocky  
Mountain Elk Foundation \* Safari Club International \* Shikar Safari Club \* Texas Wildlife Association  
The Wildlife Society \* Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership \* Trout Unlimited \* Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wildlife Forever \* Wildlife Management Institute

October 5, 2009

Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chairman  
Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member  
Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bingaman and Senator Murkowski

Our organizations represent millions of hunters and anglers, other conservationists, and resource scientists who are committed to ensuring the sustainability of fish, wildlife and their habitats on our public lands. We respectfully urge that you give no further consideration to either HR1018 or S1579, bills that would amend the Wild and Free- Roaming Horse and Burro Act in ways that would result in significant loss of public lands to fish, wildlife and their habitats.

HR1018 and S1579 would significantly change federal wild horse and burro programs, requiring that wild horses and burros be considered an "integral part of natural systems", a fundamentally different status than they now have. The legislation would expand wild horse and burro populations to all public land (both BLM and USFS), and further complicate management of wild horse and burro herds by limiting the methods by which the federal agencies can conduct removals. Expanding the management of free roaming horses and burros to all public lands will have devastating impacts to the long-term sustainability of fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

Although current management of wild horses and burros by BLM leaves room for improvement, the existing law is not the problem. Rather, the past problems experienced by wildlife agencies appears to be the lack of compliance with measures to balance competing interests that are contained in the current law. This is likely due to different agency priorities, certainly due to the lack of sufficient Congressional appropriations to BLM, and public opposition to responsible and proactive horse and burro management pursuant to the Act. However, HR1018/S1579 solves none of those fundamental problems, and would only exacerbate the deleterious effects of wild horses and burros on fish, wildlife and their habitats.

We are committed to working with you to address the growing wild horse and burro populations, but these bills do not provide remedies that are consistent with the obligations to sustain fish and wildlife on our public lands. We therefore respectfully urge that you give no further consideration to either HR1018 or S1579. Thank you for your consideration of our perspectives.