

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6635

To amend the Act commonly known as the Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act to prohibit certain uses of aircraft with respect to the management of wild free-roaming horses and burros, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 7, 2022

Ms. TITUS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To amend the Act commonly known as the Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act to prohibit certain uses of aircraft with respect to the management of wild free-roaming horses and burros, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wild Horse and Burro
5 Protection Act of 2022”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) As part of efforts to control equine popu-
2 lations under law, the Bureau of Land Management
3 is directed to humanely capture wild free-roaming
4 horses and burros for adoption.

5 (2) The Bureau of Land Management contracts
6 directly with private enterprises, including helicopter
7 companies, to round up equines at rates between
8 \$500–\$800 per animal.

9 (3) The use of helicopters to chase equines over
10 prolonged distances, usually on rough terrain, is par-
11 ticularly dangerous, and can frighten the animals
12 and lead to deadly situations.

13 (4) In January 2022, during the horse gath-
14 ering at the Pancake Complex in central Nevada, a
15 young colt was chased for miles by helicopter, ulti-
16 mately gravely injuring itself, and necessitating the
17 need for the animal to be shot and killed.

18 (5) Since 2011, the Bureau of Land Manage-
19 ment’s top three helicopter contractors have col-
20 lected over \$36.8 million in taxpayer funding for
21 their services, including over \$5.3 million since 2021
22 alone.

23 (6) Scientific research shows that more humane
24 and cost-effective alternatives exist to control equine
25 populations, including fertility controls.

1 (7) Currently, the Bureau of Land Manage-
 2 ment’s Wild Horse and Burro Program spends less
 3 than one percent of its budget on implementing fer-
 4 tility controls.

5 (8) The elimination of helicopters from the Bu-
 6 reau of Land Management’s gatherings would pro-
 7 vide a more humane method of capturing equines,
 8 and provide significant savings to taxpayers.

9 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE WILD FREE-ROAMING**
 10 **HORSES AND BURROS ACT.**

11 Section 9 of the Act commonly known as the Wild
 12 Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act (Public Law 92–
 13 195; 16 U.S.C. 1338a) is amended—

14 (1) by striking “In administering this Act” and
 15 inserting “(a) IN GENERAL.—In administering this
 16 Act”;

17 (2) by striking “helicopters or, for the purpose
 18 of transporting captured animals, motor vehicles”
 19 and inserting “motor vehicles for the purpose of
 20 transporting captured animals”;

21 (3) by striking “fixed-wing aircraft, or heli-
 22 copters, or to” and inserting “or”; and

23 (4) by adding at the end the following:

24 “(b) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN USES OF AIR-
 25 CRAFT.—In administering this Act, the Secretary may not

1 use or contract for the use of helicopters or fixed-wing air-
2 craft for the purposes of rounding up or gathering wild
3 free-roaming horses and burros.”.

4 **SEC. 4. GAO REPORT.**

5 Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment
6 of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit, to the
7 Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Rep-
8 resentatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural
9 Resources of the Senate, a report that describes—

10 (1) humane alternatives to the use of heli-
11 copters and fixed-wing aircraft in managing wild
12 free-roaming horse and burro populations;

13 (2) job creation opportunities presented by the
14 use of such humane alternatives; and

15 (3) the effects of aircraft, including unmanned
16 aircraft systems, on wild free-roaming horse and
17 burro populations.

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