



April 2, 2023

Re: Opposition to SB90

Dear Chairwoman Pazina & members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee,

The Nevada Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (NV BHA), has sportsmen and women in the field pursuing our hunting and fishing traditions throughout the far reaches of Nevada's public lands. Over the last several decades these individuals have witnessed, with increasing alarm, the ever-growing population of free-roaming horses across our public lands. Simultaneously, we have witnessed the negative impacts this excessive population of free-roaming horses has on wildlife and the vital habitats these species depend on.

NV BHA recognizes that horses have a place in our state alongside many other species on our public lands. However, horse populations have been allowed to increase, almost universally, across herd management areas (HMA) with many HMAs currently 6 times over the appropriate management levels (AML) established in the Wild Horse and Burro Act. Establishing the mustang as a state animal would celebrate the dire situation we are in and further complicate efforts to get these populations under control.

Springs and riparian areas have been devastated in many areas where horse populations are above AML. This has resulted in wetland vegetation being denuded because of excessive horse grazing and trampling impacts. These impacts to riparian and wetland corridors have far-reaching consequences. While these areas represent only a small portion of the land surface, they provide critical watering sources for wildlife and support some of the largest concentrations of biodiversity found in Nevada.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife cited horse overpopulation as one of the top factors contributing to the decline in wildlife populations including the Desert Bighorn Sheep and Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. In other words, the current overpopulations of horses are detrimental to the native populations of other state symbols.

Though the students that requested this bill are well-meaning, we fear they may have been misled and provided a very narrow and one-sided point of view on the subject from a certain horse advocacy group to promote that group's agenda.

It is imperative the committee reject SB90 to stop the false narrative promoted by horse advocacy groups and protect the native species and habitats in our state.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and for your public service to protect the health of our wildlife and their habitats,

Bryce Pollock
NV BHA Board & Policy Committee