



## Society for Range Management

10030 West 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Wheat Ridge, CO 80215  
(303) 986-3309

<http://rangelands.org>

[info@rangelands.org](mailto:info@rangelands.org)

May 8, 2009

The Honorable Nick Rahall  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
2307 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doc Hastings  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1203 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall and Ranking Member Hastings,

The Society for Range Management represents land users, land managers, and range scientists. Our goal is to ensure long term sustainability of rangelands and to improve rangeland health. We are very concerned that HR 1018 will have drastic effects on rangelands. This bill will likely result in overgrazing, serious soil erosion, degradation of streambanks, and remove many tools that allow land managers to protect America's rangelands for generations to come.

HR 1018, Restoring Our American Mustangs (ROAM) Act, would radically restructure public land management. The Bill allows for multiple use management to be set aside. The Society believes this legislation does not address critical rangeland issues and may in fact create numerous unintended consequences. It sets a dangerous precedent to move away from a balanced multiple use management on our public lands.

Society for Range Management policy is to support wild horse and burro use of rangelands in accordance with the Wild Horse and Burro Act and as part of the multiple mix of products and benefits for human welfare in locations where these animals existed when the law was passed. The law specifies management to provide "a thriving natural ecological balance". SRM interprets this to mean that long-term sustainability and productivity must be the primary consideration in devising legislation and policy for management planning and administration of rangelands, including establishment of proper numbers and management levels for wild horses and burros. Rangeland health standards and guidelines are equally appropriate for all herbivores.

Wild horse and burro populations increase rapidly and their numbers commonly expand beyond herd management areas and exceed carrying capacity unless excess animals are regularly removed. Overstocking results in deterioration of vegetation, soils, and watersheds, and leaves a potential for expansion of invasive species. Serious conflicts with wildlife, endangered species, domestic livestock, and other uses of rangelands have resulted.

**MISSION:** To promote the professional development and continuing education of members and the public and the stewardship of rangeland resources  
**VISION:** A well-trained and highly motivated group of professionals and rangeland users working with productive, sustainable rangeland ecosystems

HR 1018 allows for limitless expansion of wild horse and burro range and the designation of exclusive use areas for the animals. The bill removes the ability to remove excess animals by destruction or sale and makes the adoption process very time consuming. Additionally, it makes any transportation for processing a criminal act. The current horse and burro program is underfunded and much of the range is overpopulated with little demand for adoption of excess animals. It is inhumane to allow overpopulation on designated range and HR 1018 is not the solution. The bill radically overturns longstanding multiple use management of public lands.

The ramifications of this bill will make managing for positive long-term range health significantly more difficult. We thank you for your consideration of our position on rangeland sustainability and a balanced approach to management of our Nation's public lands for all land uses by rejecting this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Kirby". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Dr. Don Kirby  
President  
Society for Range Management