

Wild horses have long been a part of the landscape of the American West. In fact, many acknowledge these horses to be a part of a lineage that goes back for centuries. Furthermore, wild horses have long been a draw to the American Southwest for tourists and conservationists alike.

Of course, it is critical that we maintain the natural beauty of our landscape and the integrity of those animal populations that inhabit it. While it is important to maintain these ecosystems for their own sake, it is also essential that we continue to cultivate a deep appreciation for these natural treasures in ourselves and our neighbors. We know this as a result of our nation's long and storied conservation history; there is simply no way to be successful in our efforts at conservation without engagement and participation by our citizens.

Arizonans care deeply about the well-being of these beautiful horses. Obviously, this sentiment has been heard "loud and clear", and on December 29th, 2017, the Arizona Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service formally signed a deal that would split oversight management of the Salt River horses between the two agencies, ushering in the implementation of a 2016 state law that had hinged on the state and federal agencies coming to an agreement. Under the deal, the Arizona Department of Agriculture will appoint a Salt River horse liaison to the Forest Service, and the Forest Service will construct a fence to prevent horses from endangering the public along nearby freeways. With the implementation of this agreement, it will now be illegal to slaughter, harass, injure or kill the horses under state law.

In Congress, on July 18, 2018, the House Appropriations Committee approved the Fiscal Year 2019 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, which provides funding to the Department of the Interior and various programs within the Department, including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

I am heartened to share that the bill includes language that would protect the wild horses and burros in the care of the BLM. The appropriations' legislative text states, "Appropriations herein made shall not be available for the destruction of healthy, un-adopted, wild horses and burros in the care of the Bureau or its contractors or for the sale of wild horses and burros that results in their destruction for processing into commercial products." You can view the legislative text here: <https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20180716/BILLS-115HR6147HR6258-RCP115-81.pdf>.

I have followed this matter with great attention and have taken action in Congress to ensure the humane treatment of wild horses. In doing so, we continue a long tradition of conservation through participation and promise to preserve these national treasures for future generations to enjoy and love.