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Testimony for SCR 4014 (In favor of)
Committee members, thank you for allowing this written testimony;

My name is Claudia Low, I am not a North Dakota native although I was a citizen for several years. I now reside in San Angelo, TX. I am in favor of SCR 4014. I am also on the Board of Directors of North Dakota Badlands Horse (NDBH), a 501c3 non-profit organization that has partnered with the park in the past. NDBH volunteers were available to the park to help with captures, drug reversal, after capture care, and promoting the horses for auction. The volunteers then loaded the horses for transport to their new homes. NDBH is also a registry for these horses. The organization has even produced a registered TR brand for the horses in the registry. New owners keep in contact with one another via social media. These horses are shared around the world, yes, the WORLD! For example, we have documented horses living out their lives in Germany and our social media followers come from several countries around the globe. People from everywhere share training skills and stories. The adopted horses are treasured by their owners. I am an owner of a TRNP horse, and he is my heart horse. We care about this herd. We keep track of the names, the bands, the births, and the deaths. We celebrate new lives and mourn their passing. This herd is celebrated worldwide, and they are loved.

Given the cultural and historical significance of this herd of horses, they must remain in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The horses were there before the park existed, so why remove them from the only home they've ever known. Horses carried the workforce of the world in the days of Theodore Roosevelt. They plowed, help build roadways, and were used in hunting. Pioneers would not have survived without the horse. There would be no North Dakota without the horse. So how can the horses that were so significant in the history of the West, suddenly mean nothing to some. Nothing, in the way that they will be gathered and sold off by auction without vetting to whomever has the dollars. Is this what we really want to do with a national treasure? Would we let the bison go extinct again without intervening? No, we wouldn't. Therefore, we need to keep this herd in the park. They have been managed thus far without peril, so why not let them stay.

Yes, the management plan needs revision. No argument there. For the herd to be sustainable and diverse, changes are in order. Population control is priority and there is a birth control plan in place. Stress free gathers need to resume. Our organization is willing to partner with the park in this area. We will promote the horses for auction and assure, to the best of abilities, they go to safe homes. A viable herd is 100-150 horses as noted by Dr. Gus Cothran of TAMU so why would the herd be reduced to 60? Let's stick with the science.

Considering the latest findings in genomics and paleontology, the horse should likely be considered native, also. Fossils in the permafrost of the Yukon prove that horses were on the North American continent 700,000 years ago. An easy solution would be to update the park's classification of the horse from "wildlife" to "native" and these majestic animals would be protected along with the bison, elk, deer, and other mammals. How is this not a consideration? If the management plan must be updated, then so should the classification of these horses in lieu of the latest scientific findings.

These horses are unique to North Dakota, they fit in with the diversity of the Badlands. Remove them and the NPS will suffer the monetary loss. After all, many will say, "I'm here for the horses". Yes, they come to see the herd of wild horses in the park. Millions of followers on social media, yes, millions and we have the data to prove it! These horses are loved around the world.

And last but certainly not least, the peace and serenity of the park coupled with visiting a family of wild horses is soothing to the soul. There are so many stories about how this herd of horses has changed lives. They've changed my life. I know this for sure. I respectfully ask you to pass bill 4014 so these national treasures stay where they belong, in the only home they have ever known!

Thank you,
Claudia Low