

I am writing to express my support for SC4014.

Wild horses are integral to the scenery, native wildlife, and wilderness qualities of the Park – the landscape that inspired President Theodore Roosevelt and still inspires visitors today. Trying to change perception of these magnificent creatures by labeling them “livestock” is creating a false narrative. Wild horse are more similar to wildlife such as deer, elk, and antelope than cattle which have never been “native” in any part of our nation’s history.

I am one of the 80% of Americans who want wild horses to be protected and humanely managed on our public lands where they exist peacefully today. And, I want our wild horses and burros to continue to exist on our public lands far beyond my lifetime. That requires that our wild horses are not managed to extinction by poor choices of those charged with their protection.

Our wild mustangs must be allowed to exist in herd sizes that preserve genetic viability. It is well documented that a minimum viable herd must have at least 150 breeding adults. And, any choice of fertility control must be humane, reversible, and preserve wild horse behavior/herd dynamics.

SCR 4014 will help support ecotourism and business development in North Dakota by protecting the horses. I am a wildlife photographer and I enjoy visiting and photographing our wild horses. I spend tourist dollars in the areas I visit. I do not spend time or dollars in areas void of interesting wildlife.

I find time spent in nature among wildlife nourishing to my soul. We live in an age of high-tech, over-stimulating gadgetry. We need to preserve the precious few areas of nature that we still have as a place of respite and renewal. And a place void of the wild animals that make it special is just scenery. We need the entirety of these wild spaces protected...including our wild horses.