



Animal Welfare Institute

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February 6, 2025

North Dakota Legislative Council
State Capitol
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: A concurrent resolution (SCR 4006) urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

My name is Dr. Joanna Grossman, and I am the equine program director for the Animal Welfare Institute. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 4006, which urges Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. AWI is one of the nation's oldest animal protection organizations, and we advocate for the humane treatment of wild equines. We are grateful for the committee's attention to this matter and, on behalf of our hundreds of supporters in the state, urge you to support this resolution.

As the only wild herd in the state, these cherished horses are unique, and their conservation must be a priority. Unlike the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service manages only a few wild horse herds in the United States – Teddy Roosevelt being a prominent example. The Schackleford horses in North Carolina, which are also under NPS authority, were granted protections via federal legislation to ensure their preservation on the Outer Banks (the Shackleford Banks Wild Horses Protection Act, P.L. 105-229). Similarly, on separate occasions, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have passed legislation to protect the Corolla wild horses, which are also managed by NPS.¹

As this committee knows, in recent years, congressional appropriations bills have included accompanying directives underscoring the desire of North Dakotans to see the Teddy Roosevelt horses protected (S. Rept. 118-83, S. Rept. 118-201). AWI, like many others, was alarmed when the National Park Service proposed eliminating the herd in its entirety despite the immense popularity of these horses – not only among the citizens of this state, but also among countless visitors to North Dakota from across the United States.² SCR 4006 would likely go a long way

¹ “Senate Passes Burr/Tillis Amendment to Save the Corolla Wild Horses.” Press Release from the Office of Senator Burr. April 2016. *Available:* https://www.legistorm.com/stormfeed/view_rss/792408/member/15/title/senate-passes-burr-tillis-amendment-to-save-the-corolla-wild-horses.html *Amendment text available:*

<https://www.congress.gov/amendment/114th-congress/senate-amendment/3175/text> *House bill text available:*

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/126>

² National Park Service TRNP Livestock Plan documents. *Available:*

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=167&projectID=105110&documentID=125324>

towards prompting federal lawmakers to take action on this issue and work to ensure that these horses can be treasured for generations to come.

We are grateful to Chairman Kreun for holding this hearing and soliciting input, and of course to Senators Patten, Boschee, and Rummel for their leadership on this issue. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Joanna Grossman, PhD
Equine Program Director
Animal Welfare Institute