

02/05/2025

North Dakota Senate Committee
Senate Energy and Natural Resources
North Dakota State Capitol
Bismarck, ND

Subject: Testimony in Support of Senate Resolution 4006 – Protecting the Wild Horse Herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Chairman Kreun , Vice Chair Roers, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Kerry Ferguson, and I am honored to provide testimony in strong support of Senate Resolution 4006, which urges Congress to establish federal protections for the historic wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

As Executive Director of The Cloud Foundation, I am dedicated to the protection and preservation of America's wild horses and burros. I have worked extensively on issues related to wild horse conservation, public land management, and community engagement in preserving our nation's living history.

The wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park are an irreplaceable part of North Dakota's heritage, a living connection to the very spirit of the park's namesake, President Theodore Roosevelt. Their presence offers visitors a glimpse into the past, where horses roamed freely alongside bison, elk, and other native species that call the Badlands home. Beyond their historical and cultural significance, these horses contribute greatly to the park's thriving ecotourism economy, attracting visitors from across the country and around the world.

Despite their long-standing presence in the park, the National Park Service has frequently considered measures such as the use of fertility control drugs, which can effectively sterilize mares, and even the complete removal of the herd. Such actions threaten to erase an essential part of North Dakota's cultural and natural history, disregarding both the ecological role of the horses and the strong public support for their protection. This herd needs and deserves formal protection. Without it, the US Forest Service's management practices could lead to their disappearance. Losing this herd would not only be a loss to the park but also to the people of North Dakota, our country, and future generations who deserve the chance to witness these remarkable animals in their natural habitat. Theodore Roosevelt himself cherished the wild horses of this region. Allowing their removal would go against the very spirit of conservation that he championed.

Senate Resolution 4006 represents a critical step in urging Congress to take action and ensure these horses receive the federal protection they deserve. Establishing legal protections would safeguard the herd's future and recognize their role in our national story. It is imperative that we work collaboratively with state and federal agencies, tribal nations, advocacy organizations, and local communities to develop a sustainable management plan that prioritizes preservation of a healthy herd over eradication.

On behalf of The Cloud Foundation's staff, board, and our nearly half a million supporters, I urge this committee to pass Senate Resolution 4006 and stand in support of the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Kerry L Ferguson

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