

February 5, 2025

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North Dakota Legislative Assembly
Senate Energy and Natural Resources
600 East Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58505-0360

**Subject: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION FOR THE
THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK WILD HORSES**

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislature,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and advocate for the historic wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP). These iconic horses are living symbols of North Dakota's heritage, the untamed spirit of the American West, and a crucial part of the park's cultural and ecological landscape. Their presence not only enhances the park's natural beauty but also contributes significantly to local tourism and the economy.

This week, the North Dakota Legislature has a critical opportunity to lay the groundwork for federal protection and humane, science-based conservation of these horses. The two pieces of legislation under consideration will help ensure that these animals remain a cherished part of our state's legacy for future generations.

The wild horses of TRNP are deeply tied to the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, whose time in North Dakota shaped his conservation ethos and led to the establishment of America's National Parks system. Removing or drastically reducing their population would be a tragic loss, severing a vital link to our nation's history.

Furthermore, these horses have thrived in the park's ecosystem for generations, coexisting harmoniously with native wildlife. Science-based, humane management strategies—such as fertility control programs—offer practical and ethical alternatives to removals and ensure that the herd remains sustainable without

resorting to drastic measures that would permanently erase them from the landscape.

Beyond their cultural and ecological significance, the wild horses of TRNP draw thousands of visitors annually, fueling local businesses and boosting North Dakota's economy. Their loss would not only diminish the park's appeal but would also negatively impact the livelihoods of those who depend on tourism revenue.

I strongly urge the North Dakota Legislature to support legislation that establishes protective measures for these historic horses and promotes humane, science-based conservation solutions. The people of North Dakota, and indeed the entire nation, are watching closely and counting on you to uphold the values of conservation, history, and responsible stewardship.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask that you vote in favor of protecting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and securing their place in our national heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin Espinosa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Martin" and last name "Espinosa" clearly distinguishable.

Martin Espinosa Jr.