

Greetings, Senate State and Local Government Committee members.

A 57-year resident of North Dakota before retiring to South Dakota, I am Marylu Weber, president and co-founder of the North Dakota 501c3 nonprofit, North Dakota Badlands Horse (NDBH). My husband and I created NDBH in 2009 to make the public aware of the wild horses that have roamed the area of Theodore Roosevelt National Park since before Theodore Roosevelt lived there. NDBH has consistently and cooperatively worked alongside park staff for the betterment of these horses. Having personally volunteered for the park for over 20 years, I have had the privilege and joy of seeing huge improvements in management and handling. However, recently, we have witnessed the deterioration of trust between our park staff and the public. This is disappointing and detrimental; it must be rectified.

Possibly, meetings of a working group, as suggested in SB 2331, might be a neutral forum for stakeholders to openly share concerns, suggestions, and hopes concerning the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. This working group could invite input from other groups and individuals with knowledge about these horses, specifically or general horse genetics, behavior, reproduction, management, etc. Most importantly, members could hear the park staff's plans and reasons for various horse management decisions with both groups seeking mutual understanding. Providing a place for this thoughtful and respectful conversation would be a huge step toward a return to trust between the National Park Service and the public.

Knowing that sometimes putting down a mortally injured horse is the most humane action, I would like to see the words "and nonlethal" struck from page 2, line 19. With this small change, I ask you to give SB 2331 a DO PASS.

Thank you for your service to North Dakota and your consideration of this bill!

Marylu Weber, President, North Dakota Badlands Horse