

Dear Chair and Committee members,

My name is Melissa (Missy) Sivigny, and I am an advocate and supporter of the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I am from Minnesota. I'm asking that you vote to support the bill Senate Bill 2331. This bill would create the formation of a working group that would work the Theodore Roosevelt National Park to help manage the wild horses. The resolution before you is asking our federal legislators to help get federal protection for this herd since they are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Burro Act.

I wholeheartedly support this bill. The park has consistently expressed that they lack sufficient resources to manage all aspects effectively. Establishing a working group to assist them presents an excellent opportunity to enable the park to collaborate with other knowledgeable stakeholders. And allow the transparency the public needs to repair their trust in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

When considering the financial aspect, the average visitor spends \$50 for day trips and \$200 for overnight stays, leading to an overall average of \$125 per person per day. With approximately 300,000 visitors, this totals \$37,500,000 annually. Dividing this amount by an estimated 200 wild horses in the park results in \$187,500 per horse each year. Multiplying that by the average lifespan of 18 to 20 years gives a lifetime value of \$3,375,000 to \$3,750,000 per horse. These horses do truly support the park and the town for the future.

I own two horses that were once wild in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. My husband and I frequently visit the park, primarily to see these magnificent animals. The presence of the horses makes this park truly special. While living in Minnesota, we have two local options to view bison. The horses attract many visitors, and mismanagement leading to their extinction or removal would harm both the park and the town of Medora. It's easy to plan a family vacation to explore other National and State parks, especially those near larger cities with more accommodations, where you can also see other species like bison. I hope that everyone sees the true treasure that the horses are to Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Thank you for your time and proposed support of this bill.

Missy