



## **Senate State and Local Government Committee**

**SB2331. A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-60 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the Theodore Roosevelt national park working group; to provide a report; and to provide an appropriation.**

My name is Sandra Hagen Solin - I am the Colorado-based lobbyist for American Wild Horse Conservation (AWHC), the nation's leading wild horse protection organization and operator of the world's largest wild horse fertility program, in Nevada.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2331 to create a state-led working group to manage the Theodore Roosevelt wild horses.

We have first-hand experience, working closely with Governor Jared Polis and bi-partisan sponsors of this innovative bill approach, in Colorado, where the Colorado Wild Horse Working Group, on which I represent AWHC, recently published an encouraging Year 1 progress report. We would be happy to share this report with committee members.

Backed by \$1.5m of state funding, this collaboration model represents a forward-thinking approach to reducing wild horse roundups and addressing the long-term needs of wild horses that have already been removed from the wild.

Similar to the structure envisioned in North Dakota, the Colorado group is built around core on-range and off-range objectives.

On-range, that means coordination of enhanced and supplemental stewardship of horses in-the-wild, including dedicated funding for full-time fertility control darting.

Specifically, Colorado has pledged \$100,000 of the \$1.5M to assist with fertility vaccines to wild horses in 2025, enabling the US Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services to train eight darters to supplement existing volunteer efforts.

We support the use of proven, scientific, and humane fertility control methods, such as PZP (porcine zona pellucida), in the Theodore Roosevelt wild horse herd and believe this will provide for careful management that can lower birth rates while maintaining the genetic viability of this herd.

By way of illustration, Nevada's Virginia Range, reported a 66% reduction in foal birth rates in 2023 compared to 2022 and a total herd population reduction of 20% over the same period, without the removal of a single wild horse.



Additionally, in Arizona, PZP has been in use since 2019 to manage the Salt River horses and has achieved a below zero population growth rate as of 2021. In Colorado, PZP has been in use in the Spring Creek Basin HMA since 2012, where the wild horse population has been stabilized and no horses have been removed since 2011.

Off-range working group solutions are built around humane, non-lethal alternatives for wild horses taken off-range or held in federal holding facilities, creating partnerships for successful adoptions and quality assurance to support adoption networks.

We believe this model is replicable in North Dakota and we are encouraged by the innovative, multi-stakeholder approach envisaged by SB2331.

We applaud the bill's bipartisan sponsors for coming together to care for and protect the majestic Theodore Roosevelt herd and urge members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee to support the passage of SB2331.

Would be very willing to answer any bill-related questions the Committee may have to ensure the success of a new Wild Horse Working Group for North Dakota.

For the record, AWHC is also in support of concurrent legislation SCR 4006 calling for federal protections for this historic herd which we believe would be complementary legislation to SB2331.