



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

District 44
736 Elm Street North, Apt. 8
Fargo, ND 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2331 Testimony - Senate State and Local Government Committee - February 7, 2025

Chair Roers and Members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee,

SB 2331 is the result of the work of many people throughout the state working in collaboration with former Governor Burgum, Senator Hoeven and others to make sure the wild horses who currently call Theodore Roosevelt National Park home can continue to do so for generations to come. The horses are truly a natural resource of our state, which is why two years ago Governor Burgum offered state support to help the Park manage the herd. To date, the Park does not seem interested in engaging the state as a partner. Hence the legislation in front of you.

The goal of creating a working group is to provide our Congressional delegation with an entity to direct the Park to consult with before taking certain actions with the horses. This would be done through Federal legislation, likely led by Senator Hoeven and modeled off what was done with the [Colorado Wild Horse Management](#) working group and the Federal Bureau of Land Management.

Last legislative session, Governor Burgum and Senator Hoeven invited the majority and minority leaders, as well as the Attorney General, to join them in a conversation with the National Park Service Director and the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Superintendent. In that conversation, Governor Burgum offered North Dakota resources to partner with the Park in managing the horses. We all recognized that not only does the herd play an important role for tourism, but these horses are a natural treasure that have lineages to Sitting Bull and some of the original settlers of Dakota Territory.

With Governor Burgum confirmed as the Secretary of Interior, now is the time for us to establish the working group so he and Senator Hoeven can do what they need on the Federal side of things to ensure the Park is engaging and consulting with North Dakotans on how the horses are managed. This provides the opportunity to strengthen a collaborative relationship between our state and the Federal government to manage our state's natural resources in a way that benefits all Americans. Establishing this working group will ensure that the relationship will continue beyond Burgum's tenure as Interior Secretary.

Before I invite proponents of the legislation up, I have a couple suggested amendments for the committee to consider, Madam Chair.

Proposed Amendments

- Page 1, line 19 - strike the "." and replace with ", unless the health or safety of a horse is compromised."
- Page 2, line 27 - strike \$50,000 and replace with \$49,5000

I hope you'll provide SB 2331 your support and I'm happy to stand for any questions or comments you may have.