

JOE NEGUSE  
2ND DISTRICT, COLORADO



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
THE JUDICIARY  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
CLIMATE CRISIS

June 7, 2022

The Honorable Tracy Stone-Manning  
Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
1849 C St NW # 5665  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Stephanie Connolly  
Acting State Director  
Colorado Bureau of Land Management  
2850 Youngfield St.  
Lakewood, CO 80215

Dear Director Stone-Manning and Acting State Director Connolly,

I write today to express my concern over the deaths of 145 wild horses at the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Cañon City Wild Horse facility. Although it is encouraging that the mortality rate is declining, I am deeply concerned about BLM moving forward with the Piceance Basin roundup. The recent outbreak at the Cañon City facility has sparked legitimate questions regarding the conditions of wild horses in holding facilities that must be answered before more horses are put into dangerous environments. It is, therefore, important to delay the Piceance Basin horse roundup until an investigation is completed to ensure the biosecurity failures that led to the Cañon City facility outbreak will not be repeated.

As you may know, there is a consensus among veterinarians and experts at the Animal Health Division at the Colorado Department of Agriculture, as well as institutions such as Colorado State University, the University of Kentucky, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, that the stress of confinement coupled with the dusty conditions at the Cañon City facility made basic care too stressful to administer vaccines. For the 2,950 wild horses that remain in this facility, preventing the spread of infection will be difficult. If the Piceance Basin round-up were to continue as planned, more wild horses would face similar exposure to infection, which may prompt a new outbreak.

In sum, we are fortunate to have these majestic creatures across the American West. Unfortunately, this tragedy has shed further light on the reality that the current population control system for wild horses is inadequate for protecting their health and wellbeing. I respectfully request that the BLM halt the Piceance Basin roundup while the Canon City facility review is underway and we await more on how to prevent another outbreak. Further, we stand ready to work with BLM to develop cost-effective, humane solutions to wild horse population increases that do not put the lives of wild horses jeopardy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Neguse".

Joe Neguse  
Chairman  
House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands