

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 3, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Thomas Heinlein
Deputy Director of Policy and Programs
The Bureau of Land Management
760 Horizon Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Secretary Burgum and Deputy Director Heinlein,

We write with grave concern regarding recent wild horse helicopter roundups in Northwest Colorado and urge your agencies to implement an immediate freeze on upcoming roundups. Our wild horses provide significant benefit to the region and State of Colorado and should be treated with care.

This month, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has captured around 800 wild horses in the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area, six of which died during the roundups. Another roundup in the Sand Wash Basin Herd Management Area (HMA) is scheduled for early September, which will reduce the size of the herd by more than 60 percent. While we understand the need to reduce the size of these herds in accordance with the level that can be sustained on the land, the current methods being used by your agencies, including helicopter roundups, are inhumane and unnecessary. Helicopter roundups are known to cause extreme panic, exhaustion, and frequent and severe injuries to the animals. Coloradans themselves have voiced deep concern over the safety and well-being of these horses, whose risks only multiply during roundups of this scale and continue long after the gathering ends.

We would encourage you to consider postponing the scheduled roundups in order to have a more thorough and robust stakeholder and community engagement process, and work with local and state partners – such as the state's Wild Horse Advisory Committee – to craft a solution for the long-term wellbeing of these horses. We also request any evidence your agencies may have that supports the need for continued use of helicopter roundups as a more effective means for horse control against other more humane methods.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Federal Lands



Jared Polis
Governor
State of Colorado



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Dianna DeGette
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress