

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3656

To amend the Act commonly known as the Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act to prohibit certain uses of aircraft with respect to the management of wild free-roaming horses and burros, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 24, 2023

Ms. TITUS (for herself, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. SCHWEIKERT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To amend the Act commonly known as the Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act to prohibit certain uses of aircraft with respect to the management of wild free-roaming horses and burros, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wild Horse and Burro
5 Protection Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) As part of efforts to control equine popu-
2 lations under law, the Bureau of Land Management
3 is directed to humanely capture wild free-roaming
4 horses and burros for adoption.

5 (2) The use of helicopters to chase equines over
6 prolonged distances, usually on rough terrain, is par-
7 ticularly dangerous, and can frighten the animals
8 and lead to deadly situations.

9 (3) In January 2022, during the horse gath-
10 ering at the Pancake Complex in central Nevada, a
11 young colt was chased for miles by helicopter, ulti-
12 mately gravely injuring itself, and necessitating the
13 need for the animal to be shot and killed.

14 (4) Scientific research shows that more humane
15 and cost-effective alternatives exist to control equine
16 populations, including fertility controls.

17 (5) Since fiscal year 2006, Bureau of Land
18 Management contractors have collected at least
19 \$57.4 million in taxpayer funding for roundups that
20 utilize the use of helicopters, including bait-and-trap
21 methods.

22 (6) Since fiscal year 2017, the Bureau of Land
23 Management has obligated at least \$22.5 million in
24 taxpayer funding for the specific purpose of heli-

1 copter roundups, including \$6.5 million in fiscal year
2 2022 alone.

3 (7) Currently, the Bureau of Land Manage-
4 ment’s Wild Horse and Burro Program spends less
5 than one percent of its budget on implementing fer-
6 tility controls.

7 (8) The elimination of helicopters from the Bu-
8 reau of Land Management’s gatherings would pro-
9 vide a more humane method of capturing equines,
10 and provide significant savings to taxpayers.

11 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE WILD FREE-ROAMING**
12 **HORSES AND BURROS ACT.**

13 Section 9 of the Act commonly known as the Wild
14 Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act (Public Law 92–
15 195; 16 U.S.C. 1338a) is amended—

16 (1) by striking “In administering this Act” and
17 inserting “(a) IN GENERAL.—In administering this
18 Act”;

19 (2) by striking “helicopters or, for the purpose
20 of transporting captured animals, motor vehicles”
21 and inserting “motor vehicles for the purpose of
22 transporting captured animals”;

23 (3) by striking “fixed-wing aircraft, or heli-
24 copters, or to” and inserting “or”; and

25 (4) by adding at the end the following:

1 “(b) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN USES OF AIR-
2 CRAFT.—In administering this Act, the Secretary may not
3 use or contract for the use of helicopters or fixed-wing air-
4 craft for the purposes of rounding up or gathering wild
5 free-roaming horses and burros.”.

6 **SEC. 4. GAO REPORT.**

7 Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment
8 of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit, to the
9 Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Rep-
10 resentatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural
11 Resources of the Senate, a report that describes—

12 (1) humane alternatives to the use of heli-
13 copters and fixed-wing aircraft in managing wild
14 free-roaming horse and burro populations;

15 (2) job creation opportunities presented by the
16 use of such humane alternatives; and

17 (3) the effects of aircraft, including unmanned
18 aircraft systems, on wild free-roaming horse and
19 burro populations.

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