



News from the Committee on Natural Resources

Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II - Chairman

1324 Longworth House Office Building - Washington DC, 20515 - <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov>

Rahall, Grijalva Welcome Interior's Renewed Attention to Wild Horse and Burro Program



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Washington, D.C. - The Department of the Interior (DOI) today announced a new proposal to ramp up its commitment to the beleaguered Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wild horse and burro program - which includes several components of the Restore Our American Mustangs (ROAM) Act, legislation sponsored by House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) and Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Chairman Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) and approved by the House of Representatives in July 2009.

"For far too long, wild horses and burros have been treated like a nuisance and subjected to long-term storage and slaughter - a problem documented in a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation and addressed by the ROAM Act. With this announcement, Interior Secretary Salazar and BLM Director Abbey have shown their commitment to reversing this deplorable trend by making wild horses on public lands a priority, and I applaud that decision. We have been fighting this battle for a long time now, and will continue to do so until the BLM fulfills its duty under the law to protect America's free-roaming wild horses and burros," said **Chairman Rahall**.

"Years of attempts by BLM to shoe-horn these magnificent animals into ever-shrinking territory has manufactured an overcrowding problem. Restoring horses and burros to the acreage from which they have been needlessly removed is critical. However, if the

agency wants to work with the Congress to find the acreage and the funding needed to relocate these animals to land east of the Mississippi River, I will work with my colleagues to explore these options," said **Chairman Rahall**.

"Secretary Salazar's plan is a significantly refreshing improvement from the previous Administration's efforts, and moves forward our attempts to improve the agency's management of America's wild horses and burros. I look forward to continuing these efforts to forge common ground among advocates, as we work together to find permanent solutions to range management to protect and preserve our wild horses and ensure their continued presence on our nation's public lands," said **Chairman Grijalva**.

A 2008 report by the GAO, requested by Chairman Rahall, identified a number of deficiencies plaguing the BLM wild horse and burro program. The ROAM Act would amend the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 to include these recommendations and assist the BLM in achieving long-term savings, while protecting wild horses through a host of management tools. These would include an enhanced adoption program, improved contraception, and other efficiencies. These strategies would relieve the agency from having to round up the horses and care for them in long-term holding facilities.