

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Natural Resources

Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

I write regarding the Bureau of Land Management's Instruction Memoranda No. 2018-066 (IM) providing guidance for the sale of excess wild horses and burros published on May 24, 2018. The new guidance changes the requirements for purchasing multiples animals, increasing the number requiring approval by the Assistant Director for Resources and Planning from 4 to 25. The new guidance also allows purchasers to buy animals more than once in a six-month period without additional review.

As you know, Congress amended the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act to authorize the sale of excess animals. The sale authority only applies to older animals or those that have not been adopted after three attempts. However, Congress explicitly prohibits the sale of wild horses and burros for the purpose of slaughter and commercial processing. The new standards for the sale of multiple animals published in the IM raise concerns about the Department's commitment to this longstanding prohibition.

Prior to the implementation of the screening requirements supplanted by the IM, which were published on August 16, 2014, there were multiple reports of animals being sold to purchasers with a known history of sending them to slaughter. In fact, the U.S. Department of the Interior Office of the Inspector General determined that the Bureau of Land Management violated the law and "failed to enforce the [agency's] policy of limiting the sales of horses and ensuring that the horses went to good homes."¹ Changing the policies that were put in place to remedy this issue seems counterproductive.

To assist with my understanding of the updated IM and fulfill my oversight duty as Ranking Member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, please provide answers to the following questions:

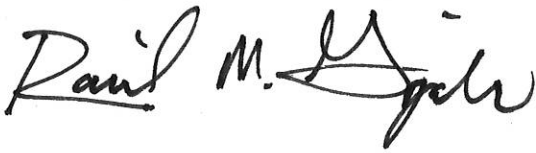
- What problem is solved by increasing the number of animals that require approval by a factor of more than 5? What has the Department determined will be the effect on the likelihood that horses sold in bulk will be slaughtered or neglected?

¹ U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General (2015). *Investigative Report of Bureau of Land Management Horse Buyer*. Washington, DC. Available online:
https://www.doioig.gov/sites/doioig.gov/files/WildHorseBuyer_Public.pdf

- What problem is solved by allowing multiple purchases within a six-month period without approval? What has the Department determined will be the effect on the likelihood that horses sold in bulk will be slaughtered or neglected?
- Given the increased focus on the sale of multiple animals, how will the Department ensure that purchasers are able to provide adequate feed, care and a facility?
- How does the Department plan to ensure that horses are not sold for slaughter and the processing of commercial products?

Thank you for your attention this issue. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources