



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

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#### INTERIOR FAVORS PROTECTION ON WILD HORSES ON WESTERN LANDS

Legislation to prevent cruelty, poisoning, or the indiscriminate slaughter of wild horses or burros on western public lands has been endorsed by the Department of the Interior, Elmer F. Bennett, Acting Secretary of the Interior, said today.

The legislation--H.R. 2725, H.R. 4289, and H.R. 7531--would provide penalties for use of airplanes or motor vehicles to hunt, maim, capture, or kill unbranded horses or burros on public lands. The bills also prohibit the pollution of water holes on public lands or ranges for the same purposes.

In a letter to Chairman Emanuel Celler of the House Judiciary Committee, Mr. Bennett said, "We are opposed to any form of cruelty, poisoning, or indiscriminate slaughter of the animals to which these bills refer.

"The current problem arises from so-called bootleg horse gathering operations which are not sanctioned by permit from the proper law enforcement agencies of the States. We are in agreement that such operations should be halted although the primary responsibility for control rests with the State."

The report requested that the bills be amended to permit Federal agencies responsible for range and wildlife management to use aircraft or motor vehicles, under proper supervision, when conditions necessitate removal of some animals.

It is sometimes necessary, the report said, for federal agencies--such as the Department's Bureau of Land Management or Fish and Wildlife Service--to round up wild horses or burros. It pointed out that round ups by airplane, properly conducted, were more humane than the older methods of running wild horses to exhaustion by relays of horses and riders.

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