

TALKING POINTS FOR MEETING WITH YOUR SENATORS

1. Call the local offices to schedule a meeting ([find contacts here](#)).

Here's a suggestion for what to say:

"Hello, I am a constituent of _____ and I would like to set up a meeting to talk about appropriations for the Interior Department's wild horse management program. I would also like to request that the staff person who handles Interior Department appropriations in your Washington office attend the meeting by conference call.

When you get your meeting, dress professionally, be friendly and polite. Ask questions about the legislator's position on this issue, so you understand what you should focus on in your discussion.

2. Suggested points to address include:

- The Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has mismanaged the wild horse program for decades, digging a fiscal black hole by warehousing tens of thousands of captured mustangs. The program is costly and inhumane.
- There is a better way to manage wild horses that's good for American taxpayers and good for mustangs. Horses should be managed on the range, utilizing fertility control, range enhancements and other tools that avert the need for removals.
- The BLM's current budget proposals continue the same failed approach to wild horse management. Over the next four years (2011-2014), BLM proposes to remove an additional 32,800 wild horses from the range, driving the holding costs for captured mustangs even higher.
- The BLM already warehouses more wild horses in tax-funded holding facilities (42,000+) than are living free on the range (<33,000). This removal and stockpiling of horses will account for nearly \$50 million of the program's \$77 million projected budget over the next four years.
- The problem is not overpopulation. Fewer than 33,000 horses live on over 26 million acres of BLM land. The BLM allocates the majority of forage and water on the 11 percent of BLM lands designated as wild horse habitat to privately-owned livestock. It's cattle and sheep – not wild horses and burros – that are over-running and destroying our public lands.
- The BLM has demonstrated repeatedly that it is not capable of reforming itself. Therefore, it's up to Congress to reform this broken federal program, by rejecting the BLM's request for a funding increase. The BLM has stated that without a budget increase, they cannot fund additional roundups.

3. Ask your Senators and Congresspersons to take the actions detailed on the **Lobbying Fact Sheet**. Offer this document for informational purposes and leave it behind for the staff when you end the meeting.

4. Thank your elected officials and/or their staff members for their time. Follow up your meeting with a handwritten note thanking them again and urging them to take the requested actions to help protect America's wild horses.