



**American Wild Horse
PRESERVATION CAMPAIGN**

For Immediate Release

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Nevada Anti-Mustang Legislation Would Have Catastrophic Consequences, Animal Welfare Groups Warn

Assembly Bill 329 would deny wild horses access to water and subject state to costly litigation

Carson City, Nevada (May 10, 2011) -The [ASPCA](#)[®] (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals[®]) and the [American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign](#) (AWHPC) have joined together to urge the Nevada State Senate to reject Assembly Bill (AB) 329, which would deny access to water for wild horses and burros in the state. The bill has passed the Nevada General Assembly and is awaiting a hearing before the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

“While couched as a neutral water appropriation bill, AB 329 was clearly drafted to have the cruel and illegal result of depriving wild horses and burros in Nevada of their access to water,” wrote attorney Bruce Wagman of Schiff Hardin LLC, a national law firm representing the groups, in a letter sent Monday to Governor Brian Sandoval and the Nevada Senate. “Contrary to the claims of AB 329 supporters, this proposed law could have a catastrophic impact on wild horses and burros, who depend on these natural water sources for survival.”

The bill is proceeding through the legislature despite a total absence of a legal or legislative analysis of its implications. The legislation undermines the federal Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act and its passage would result in protracted litigation, “placing the state in the unenviable position of spending its revenues to defend a law that threatens the existence of America’s national icon, the wild horse.”

The bill’s sponsor, Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea, has acknowledged that he introduced AB 329 at the request of cattlemen and hunters from rural northeastern Nevada. These narrow special interest groups view wild horses and burros as competition for cheap commercial livestock grazing and big game hunting on public lands.

“If AB 329 passes, wild horses and burros would be the only wild animals in the state excluded from the definition of wildlife, a move that will lead to a new landscape in Nevada littered with the bodies of wild horses and burros who have died of thirst,” said Betsy Dribben, vice president of ASPCA Federal Affairs. “The bill is a direct assault on the federal law, enacted unanimously by the Congress and with overwhelming support of the public, to protect wild horses and burros as part of our national heritage.”

“It would be irresponsible for Nevada senators to vote for AB 329 without even knowing its legal and economic implications for the state,” added Neda DeMayo, AWHPC coalition member and CEO of [Return to Freedom](#). “Wild horses evolved in North American and are an integral part of Nevada’s landscape. The mustangs have contributed significantly to the culture here since before the turn of the century.”

“The Senate must not allow narrow special interests to trump the interests of the state’s economy and the broader interests of the general public, which wants to see these majestic animals protected on the Western range where they belong,” DeMayo concluded.

A copy of the letter that was sent to the Nevada Senate and Governor Sandoval on behalf of the groups is available upon request.

About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is the first humane organization established in the Americas and serves as the nation’s leading voice for animal welfare. One million supporters strong, the ASPCA’s mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States.

As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. The ASPCA, which is headquartered in New York City, offers a wide range of programs, including a mobile clinic outreach initiative, its own humane law enforcement team, and a groundbreaking veterinary forensics team and mobile animal CSI unit. For more information, please visit www.aspca.org. To become a fan of the ASPCA on Facebook, go to <http://www.facebook.com/aspca>. To follow the ASPCA on Twitter, go to <http://www.twitter.com/aspca>.

About the AWHPC

The American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign (AWHPC), supported by a coalition of over 40 organizations, is dedicated to preserving the American wild horse in viable free-roaming herds for generations to come, as part of our national heritage. For more information visit www.wildhorsepreservation.org.

About Return to Freedom

Return to Freedom (RTF) spearheaded the AWHPC's creation in 2004. RTF is dedicated to preserving the freedom, diversity and habitat of America's wild horses through sanctuary, education and conservation, while enriching the human spirit through direct experience with the natural world. Learn more at www.returntofreedom.org.

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