

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Eighty-second Session
March 7, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Natural Resources was called to order by Chair Julie Pazina at 3:31 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, in Room 2144 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Julie Pazina, Chair
Senator Melanie Scheible, Vice Chair
Senator Edgar Flores
Senator Pete Goicoechea
Senator Ira Hansen

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alysa Keller, Policy Analyst
Erin Sturdivant, Counsel
Donna Crawford Kennedy, Committee Secretary

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Bert Gurr, Assembly District No. 33

OTHERS PRESENT:

Helen Foley, American Wild Horse Campaign
Evan Reardon, Student, Doral Academy
Saisrihitha Kasireddy, Student, Doral Academy
Gray Hughes, Student, Doral Academy
Naomi Butler, Student, Doral Academy
Keilie Nebecker, Student, Doral Academy
Sriansh Kola, Student, Doral Academy
Carly Morgan, Student, Doral Academy

Senate Committee on Natural Resources
March 7, 2023
Page 2

Kaylee Kimmerly, Student, Doral Academy
Tracy Wilson, Nevada State Director, American Wild Horse Campaign
Kris Thompson, Project Manager, Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center
Greg Hendricks, American Wild Horse Campaign
Nicole Hayes, American Wild Horse Campaign
Deb Walker, American Wild Horse Campaign
Cathy Cottrill, American Wild Horse Campaign
Deni French
Allison Hinkle, Virginia Range Coordinator, American Wild Horse Campaign
Sena Loyd, Director of Public Policy, Blockchains, Inc.
Suzanne Baker
Lori Lee
Monica Ross, Volunteer Ambassador, American Wild Horse Campaign
Elaine Proffitt
Rachel Holzer-Robinson
Mendy Elliott, City of Fernley
Zach Rhodes
Tina Nappe
Sheldon Mudd, Executive Director, Northeastern Nevada Regional Development Authority
Ashton Caselli, Director, Northern Nevada Safari Club International; Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife; Coalition for Nevada Healthy Lands
Joel Blakeslee, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife; Coalition for Nevada Healthy Lands
Larry Johnson, President, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife
Gianna Caselli
Lydia Teel, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited
Chloe Crookshanks
Wes Reynolds
Sherman Swanson
Giovani Caselli
Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President, Nevada Farm Bureau
William Molini, Director, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife
Carly Holst
Karen Boeger
Steve Walker, Eureka County
Brianna Merrill, Rangeland and Water Quality Specialist, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe
David McNinch, Board of Wildlife Commission

Senate Committee on Natural Resources
March 7, 2023
Page 3

Faith Machuca, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mark Freese, Habitat Staff Specialist, Nevada Department of Wildlife

CHAIR PAZINA:
Helen Foley will be presenting Senate Bill (S.B.) 90.

SENATE BILL 90: Designates the wild mustang as the official state horse of the State of Nevada. (BDR 19-560)

HELEN FOLEY (American Wild Horse Campaign):
I am with the American Wild Horse Campaign (AWHC). I am pleased to introduce S.B. 90. This bill designates the wild mustangs as the official State horse of Nevada. There are people here who are going to testify in support of this bill. The students from Doral Academy in Reno are the most excited. There are members from the AWHC and from the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center, highly active citizens involved with the fertility management program, and others.

There is a Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of the U.S. that has been in effect since 1971. Unfortunately, it only protects those wild and free-roaming horses or burros on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. As we know, there are many areas of Nevada that are not protected by that Act. Senate Bill 90 specifically mentions free-roaming horses in the Virginia Range area. It states the horse would not have a brand or other mark to indicate ownership of the horse; this would include all wild mustangs in existence here in Nevada. Tracy Wilson, Nevada State Director for the American Wild Horse Campaign, will provide more details about the wild horses.

CHAIR PAZINA:
This bill was brought forward by the incredibly enterprising students at Doral Academy. There are some nine- and ten-year-old students with us today who are here for their very first exposure to civic engagement and to learn more about the legislative process. Others will have the opportunity to testify in support, opposition and neutral. We are also going to provide an additional ten minutes over the phone lines for support, opposition and neutral.

EVAN REARDON (Student, Doral Academy):
I am in fourth grade at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada in Reno. I am ten years old and my favorite subjects are English Language Arts and math. I love wild mustangs because they are very majestic when they run in the wild.

I love seeing them when they are in my neighborhood. Half of the population of wild mustangs live in Nevada. Wild mustangs live in herds of stallions, a couple of mares and other horses. While researching the wild mustang, I learned the wild mustang is a symbol of freedom. I am asking you to vote yes on S.B. 90 for the wild mustangs to become the State horse.

SAISRIHITHA KASIREDDY (Student, Doral Academy):

My class and I have been learning about the legislative process, and S.B. 90, a bill that would make the wild mustang Nevada's State horse. I am speaking today to ask you if we can count on your support of this bill. I believe the wild mustang should become our State horse because they deserve to be free to roam around. They are a symbol of freedom. They also deserve respect because of us destroying their homeland and killing their family members.

Another reason to support this bill is it would be nice to have a State animal that is common to see, unlike the bighorn sheep. We should also support this bill because the wild mustangs are a symbol of freedom. In conclusion, I support S.B. 90, and I hope my testimony encourages you to agree.

GRAY HUGHES (Student, Doral Academy):

I am in fourth grade at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada in Reno. We have been learning about the legislative process and S.B. 90, a bill that makes the wild mustangs the Nevada State horse. I think the wild mustangs should be our State horse because they have been around since Native-American times and represent our State because Nevadans love the horses and seeing them run free and happy in the wild.

NAOMI BUTLER (Student, Doral Academy):

I am in fourth grade at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada in Reno. We have been learning about the legislative process by studying S.B. 90, a bill making the wild mustangs our State horse. I am writing to ask if we can count on you to make a good decision whether this bill should or should not be passed. At first, I thought this bill should not be passed, but then I thought about it a little more. I believe this bill should be passed because Nevada is a free state, and wild mustangs are free-roaming horses; they represent freedom.

KEILIE NEBECKER (Student, Doral Academy):

I am in fourth grade at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada in Reno. I am nine years old and like having wild mustangs and other horses around. I have

learned about the “Wild Horse Annie Act” and would love to have them be our State horse. I also learned they have lived here for millions of years. This is their homeland and we moved into their land. I think the wild mustangs should be a State symbol because they are majestic creatures. I am asking you to support S.B. 90 to make the wild mustangs our State horse.

SRIANSH KOLA (Student, Doral Academy):

I am ten years old. Wild horses are amazing creatures. I have learned the evolution of horses took place in North America. I also learned that for the development of the American West, horses and burros were vital. I think the wild mustangs should be a Nevada symbol because most mustangs live in the Virginia Range, which is in Nevada. I am asking you to support S.B. 90 to make the wild mustangs our State horse.

CARLY MORGAN (Student, Doral Academy):

I am in fourth grade at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada in Reno. We have been learning about the legislative process. Senate Bill 90 is a bill that would make the wild mustang the Nevada State horse. I am asking you if we can count on your support of this bill. I believe the wild mustangs should become our State horse because we have a lot of them in Nevada. The first horses were found throughout North America and Eurasia which is another reason they should be the State horse.

KAYLEE KIMMERY (Student, Doral Academy):

I am in fourth grade at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada in Reno. I am ten years old, and my favorite subject is reading. I support S.B. 90 because I have lived around the wild mustangs my whole life and think they are beautiful and majestic creatures. While researching the wild mustang, I learned wild mustangs were rounded up and taken to slaughterhouses until the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act was enacted in 1971. The wild mustangs are symbolic to Nevada and have lived here for centuries. The wild mustangs symbolize freedom. Passing S.B. 90 would be impactful to the hearts of Nevadans and there is no cost to the government. I am asking all of you to vote yes on S.B. 90 to make the wild mustangs, like those I see every day, the State horse.

CHAIR PAZINA:

I think we should all give a round of applause to these nine- and ten-year-old Doral Academy students who have presented today. I applaud how articulate

they are and their civic engagement. I want everyone to know that we also received, as a Committee, letters ([Exhibit C](#)) from their classmates who prepared statements on their thoughts regarding S.B. 90. The entire class was involved and these testifiers are talented and articulate representatives.

TRACY WILSON (Nevada State Director, American Wild Horse Campaign):
I oversee the world's largest wild horse conservation program right here in the heart of Nevada to humanely reduce the population of horses on the Virginia Range without the need for removals.

But this is about something more. As a Nevada resident, I recognize the importance of the wild mustang to Nevada's history and culture. Wild mustangs are woven into the very tapestry of Nevada life. We know through polling that most Nevadans believe the wild mustang is a defining symbol of Nevada.

I have a short story to share: a father in the Netherlands told his daughters that when they turned 16, he would take them anywhere in the world. His daughter, Jusine Bom, chose Nevada; she wanted to see wild mustangs. They spent a couple of days on the range fulfilling her dream, and then they spent the rest of their visit in the U.S. visiting other Nevada attractions.

Our State has symbols, but no State horse, yet the wild mustangs are the prominent feature on the State quarter, a design chosen by popular vote. So popular in a daily poll, after the minting of all the state quarters had concluded, the Nevada State Quarter ranked No. 8 out of 50. I would like to address concerns. Senate Bill 90 is a designation; it does not ask for protections. The word mustang was chosen to honor our free-roaming horses but not interfere with existing legal definitions, such as wild horse or feral livestock. *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 569 defines feral livestock as:

...any formerly domesticated livestock or progeny of domesticated livestock which have become wild and are running at large upon public or private lands in the State of Nevada, and which have no physical signs of domestication.

There are no longer privately owned ranch horses running on the Virginia Range. The horses living there were born there and only know life as wild mustangs. In fact, NRS 569 makes it illegal to remove one without proper authorization. Here

in Nevada, in our corner of the West, we live with a gift; let us recognize and honor the gift with this designation.

MS. FOLEY:

Lacey J. Dalton is a country western singer who wrote a song that is apropos to this discussion. It is about Storey County and the wild horses called "*Let Em Run*" that will be played for you.

KRIS THOMPSON (Project Manager, Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center):

I am the Project Manager for the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center (TRIC) in Storey County. I have been there about ten years. I have been a part of about every tour of buyers coming into our park from the top tech companies and Wall Street companies in the entire world. I can tell you, without a doubt, how important the wild horses are that roam across the TRIC on those visits. I cannot recall a single buyer coming in who was not impressed with the horses. They post them on Instagram, like Elon Musk; they will publish articles on wild horses. The phrase that went viral on the world tech websites and financial websites after Tesla came into TRIC was "Tesla gigafactory is located outside Reno where wild horses still roam." These tech companies like the wild horses because they appeal to their sense of who they are as companies—outliers and leaders. The wild horses are independent, rugged and self-reliant, just like Nevadans. That is appealing to people. I urge each of you to vote yes on this bill. The whole tech world views the wild horses as emblematic of Nevada, and I think we should do the same.

CHAIR PAZINA:

A reminder we are still in testimony and not in support of the bill yet. We will be calling Ms. Foley back in just a moment so we can start committee questions.

GREG HENDRICKS (American Wild Horse Campaign):

I am member of the BLM, Sierra Front, Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council that represents three of the northern districts for the BLM, which includes Carson City, Winnemucca and Elko.

I represent American Wild Horse Campaign on the Council. I come from a background of range management, having worked with the Carson City district in 1978 for seven years. I ended my range career, retired from the AWHC during the Virginia Range Fertility Control Program launched in 2019. That is the largest fertility control program in the world and is showing impressive results.

I have had an opportunity to talk to a lot of businesses and chambers of commerce. I have seen a significant amount of support coming from them, not just because of the nature of the mustang and how well it fits with Nevada, but also from the ecotourism that comes from people from all over the world who come to Nevada. If you have taken the train to Virginia City, you will see people tipping the train taking pictures anywhere they see wild horses on the side of the tracks. There is a huge benefit that comes with our mustangs in Nevada. If there is a state that should have a designated wild horse, it is Nevada. We have most of the wild horses and most of the interest, which also fits our western heritage. More than 80 percent of people like wild horses and want them managed, including the mustangs of the Virginia Range. You have an opportunity to take Nevada to the next level. It is another resource that we can tap to make things better and to bring the nature of the wild mustang to the forefront. We benefit from having them on the Range, just like our other wildlife.

NICOLE HAYES (American Wild Horse Campaign):

I have worked as a conservation biologist for the last seven years. As a new Nevada resident, I can testify seeing wild horses and wild mustangs for the first time instilled a sense of wonder and amazement. This is especially true when you are lucky enough to come across one. Since moving from Florida, the first thing people bring up when they talk about visiting me is seeing the horses. State symbols represent the cultural and natural wonders unique to a state. They can instill a sense of pride and wonder in a state's residents.

In 1971, Congress unanimously agreed that wild mustangs are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West. This was following the dedicated campaigning and fortitude of Nevada native, Thelma Johnson. Nevada is unique in that it has the largest number of wild mustangs of any state and is directly centered in the history of their protection. People around the world celebrate wild horses for their beauty, personality and history. The beauty of this symbol, as our State symbol, is that the American mustang embodies all the horses living wild across the State, regardless of what land they live on. Whether you love the mustangs or not, there is no denying their existence and the significant impact they have had on the culture and history of Nevada. Their very existence has been the catalyst for many debates, lessons and civic engagement activities for both children and adults. The wild mustangs have had a way of engaging Nevada citizens like no other animal in our history. Today, I ask for your support

and ask that you vote yes on S.B. 90 to designate the wild mustang as the State horse of Nevada.

DEB WALKER (American Wild Horse Campaign):

I am the former Virginia Range Fertility Control Program coordinator. Prior to then, I taught seventh grade math and followed my U.S. Air Force husband around the Country, living in multiple areas. When we retired, he asked me where I wanted to live, and here we are. We live in Fish Springs, out with the wild horses. We moved here in 2011, and over the past ten-plus years, I have given multiple tours to people from all over the world who wanted to see the wild horses. They have come from Sweden, Australia, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. There was a veterinary school team that came because we had a stallion that had died and they wanted to look at his skeleton.

People throughout the U.S. have come here and I have been one of multiple people who have given tours for the wild horses. But during that time, they would say, where do we stay, where do we eat, where do we play? I realized that while they are here looking at the wild mustangs, they are also spending their money in Nevada. The eyes around the world are watching this decision. They all know this is on the table. The wild mustangs represent everything Nevada represents. I urge you to vote yes.

SENATOR HANSEN:

I was told there are 3,600 wild horses in Storey County, which is approximately 264 square miles. If fertility work is being done, it has been a miserable failure. You obviously want to see the horse numbers reduced. Do you have a number in mind as to what the proper herd management levels should be in Storey County? If you have 3,600 horses and your number is 600, what number is realistic for an area of 264 square miles? The numbers are disproportionate to what the actual habitat can support.

MS. WILSON:

Our Program restarted in the middle of foaling season in April 2019. That means a lot of the mares that got started on birth control that year were already pregnant with their foals for next year. If we look at the numbers, comparing the end of 2020 to the end of 2022, we reduced the foal crop by 61 percent. We have a high mortality rate on the range: 50 percent of the foals born do not survive. The surviving foal rate has dropped low enough that we reduced the population by nearly 20 percent in 3 1/2 years.

If we continue the Program, the number will continue to decline as more horses die than are born. The range itself is a little under 300,000 acres. As to a definitive number, it is hard to answer because ranges are primarily private land. There has been a lot of development, both commercial and residential property happening on this range. That number needs to stay fluid, but we want to reduce the number. Not only do we want to reduce the number, but we are also collaborating with stakeholders to develop range improvement plans, riparian protection, and water source improvements. We want to see an ecosystem that blooms and draws people to see it, to appreciate it and for all the animals to survive in good health.

SENATOR HANSEN:

We are on the same page. I have spent a good portion of my life in Storey County, the higher country. The deer herd is about gone; the bighorn sheep population is dropping as we speak and the wild horse populations along the Truckee River have absolutely devastated the riparian zones all the way from the McCarran Ranch down to Derby Dam. I love horses; I grew up with horses. But when you have way too many of them, and they start to destroy the habitat the indigenous populations of animals need, it is devastating.

There is no longer any sharing. We have 3,600 animals in 264 square miles. The bighorn and mule deer populations are diminishing and the riparian habitats are being damaged. We need to reduce the horse numbers. But you must produce realistic numbers. The Virginia Range herd, right now, is not managed; it is wildlife habitat that properly belongs to the indigenous populations of animals that are being eliminated in Storey County. I just want to get that on the record. I am with everybody here; I love seeing wild horses in the deserts. I have spent innumerable hours in the backcountry of Nevada, and it is a treat to see them, but we must recognize that all these animals need to be significantly managed. That is why, with the Wild Horses and Burros Act, they had specific animal management levels we were supposed to achieve, and we are exceeding those by five and ten times in many of these areas.

Although Storey County is not part of the Wild Horses and Burros Act, we need to talk about management—not just the beautiful romantic things—because the animals harmed are the very horses you think you love. They are harmed because there are too many of them in too small an area. You said the foal crop is dying at the rate of 50 percent. What do you attribute that to?

MS. WILSON:

Predators and mountain lions are killing that many. We see not only the carcasses but the attacks before they die. The bighorn sheep population at TRIC has grown and part of that is because the mountain lions are specializing in horses and reducing the pressure on the bighorn sheep.

SENATOR HANSEN:

I heard from the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) that the bighorn herd is declining. We are all on the same page as far as wanting to keep things manageable, but the idea you are presenting and your abilities to lower those populations seems unsuccessful.

MR. HENDRICKS:

I want to address the goal of 600 horses that Senator Hansen mentioned. That number came from a study done by the BLM in 2000. They analyzed the BLM land on the Virginia Range. The BLM was looking at only one-third of the Virginia Range. Obviously, at that time, they could not get onto all the different private lands. The challenge is trying to determine the carrying capacity because there is so much land, and a lot of it is locked down; you cannot get on it. There is more capacity out there, just based on that study.

One of the things we do not take into consideration is the damage from a fire in the Virginia Range. Unfortunately, we do not have a lot of money to build back the resources with seeding, so it goes to cheatgrass. In effect, the horses have helped us a bit because they cut the cheatgrass down by grazing. Currently, the Virginia Range does not have the same fires they had in the past.

The point is that cheatgrass is not good range. What we want to do is improve the habitat and reduce the numbers. The Program did have success, but it was unattended for two years while another option was being entertained to eliminate horses from State control. As a result, the population blew up.

The American Wild Horse Campaign came back in with a fertility control program and implemented it in 2019. We cut the number to zero population growth in about the third year. Now the numbers are starting to decline. Fertility control takes time. But now that you have paid the price to get these horses treated, you are going to start seeing the results. You are seeing a 60 percent reduction unfolding right now. The predation adds to the numbers being

eliminated. Technically, your numbers are going to start coming down significantly in the near future.

SENATOR HANSEN:

I would love to debate this more, but I do not want to monopolize the conversation. For the fourth graders, this is how the legislative process works. There are two sides to every issue and you need to make sure you get an opportunity to hear both sides.

SENATOR FLORES:

I want to say thank you to the students for presenting a bill. You did a wonderful job. This is your Legislative Building and adults have to listen to you. You have a voice, and then one of these days you are going to be sitting here, and you are going to see other students, and you must encourage them to do the same. I want you to be proud of the work you did. You make some great arguments. You should be proud of yourselves.

I had the opportunity to listen to a whole host of people coming from all angles in a very passionate way. I appreciate that because Nevadans obviously care about horses. One of the things I have heard is the concern about the environmental impact and, as Chair Pazina said, what we are talking about is a State horse. At the end of the day, when you are talking about horses, it is difficult to get away from all these other conversations. By having conversation and acknowledging we have a State horse, can that inadvertently have other benefits such as educational or to force conversations that are not necessarily happening? Is there a benefit saying we have a State horse or a State X, Y or Z; does that conversation bring an actual benefit, an impact, to our classrooms? I am interested in engaging in that conversation. Do you think having a State horse will benefit the grand conversation about horses in Nevada? Who can engage in that, please?

MR. THOMPSON:

There is an inherent benefit in making wild horses emblematic and enshrining them. I can tell you it is a major benefit in the business world. There is no better marketing logo than wild horses. Elon Musk and the Governor were at TRIC announcing the \$3.5 billion electric truck manufacturing plant with approximately 3,000 new jobs. At that event, the trailer of the sample truck had a long mural showing wild horses on a ridge overlooking the Tesla Gigafactory. That is the impact it has in my world. It is good inherently, but it is also good

for Nevada businesses and for drawing in other tech companies who view environmental excellence as a prerequisite to locating somewhere. So, preserving these wild horses and taking diligent care of them, not sending them off to slaughter or to kill, is a key feature in drawing in these companies.

MS. WILSON:

In answer to your question, by designating the wild mustang as the State horse, the conversation goes into our history. The Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act started in Nevada. The questions are how was Nevada developed; how did people come to Nevada? They came to Nevada on horseback. That is how the populations began to grow. It opens a whole exploration into the history of Nevada and how the horses served the people in development and mining and all sorts of distinct aspects. There is a lot to be learned, explored and promoted through history.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

I have lived closer and longer with the horses in this State than anybody in this room. We are talking about the same issue here, but the key we are missing is management. I see nothing in this bill that is going to bring the managing of horses forward. The bottom line is you cannot have 3,600 head of horses on the Virginia Range and sustain them. You cannot put 50,000 head of horses in the State and sustain them. This is not about the wild horse. Language needs inclusion here that talks about complying with The Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, that states that appropriate management levels must be maintained. That is what we need to talk about. Everybody loves horses. I rode some good mustangs and lived with them. I grew up with them. You do not need to tell me about the mustang and how majestic and how great they are. The bottom line is we need to have some language to manage the horses. Even the fourth-grade students who visited my office know about that.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:

I want to make sure about the designation as the State horse. We have a State element, a State animal, a State flower, and a State fish; creating a State horse does not automatically create any protections or prevent us from passing further policies to manage or limit those populations. I want to make sure we are not setting ourselves up for a problem down the road if we try to develop a more comprehensive management plan. Is there something stating we are not able to do X, Y or Z if designated a State symbol? Is there any statute preventing a management plan if we make the mustang the State horse?

MS. WILSON:

Words used in the legal definitions use mustang as an encompassing term for free-roaming horses. This bill is purely a designation. It does not ask for protection and does not ask for management. Requirements for management is still in the hands of the agencies overseeing that now.

CHAIR PAZINA:

We will now take testimony from those in support of S.B. 90.

CATHY COTTRILL (American Wild Horse Campaign):

I moved here in December 2017. The most beautiful thing here is the love of the horses and the history they represent. I would love to have the mustang as a symbol of Nevada.

DENI FRENCH:

We are talking about the mustang becoming a State symbol. Mustangs have a rightful place in history, not only in the State but in the Country. If you look at the seven different breeds of horses, they are top-notch. They are the start of all horses except for the small horse, which was in the U.S or at least North America millions of years ago and disappeared. The mustang symbolizes what Nevada should be: a place where people have an opportunity to thrive. Management is important. We must do our management bit, but I do not believe that is part of this bill. It is about making the mustang the State symbol. The management must be for all of us to consider. It is about everything we do as human beings because if we do not do it right, we could extinguish ourselves, and all of nature.

ALLISON HINKLE (Virginia Range Coordinator, American Wild Horse Campaign):

Wild mustangs are a key part of Nevada's history. When one thinks of the historical western U.S., it is impossible to imagine Nevada without wild mustangs roaming the open range. The first thing that drew my attention, and part of my desire to move here six years ago, were the wild mustangs. I have learned about these horses and the spirit they bring to our local community. It is now almost impossible for me to catch up with my out-of-state family and friends without talking about the wild mustangs. My family and friends are eager to visit and to see the what the Wild West truly has to offer. I can assure you they are never disappointed when they see the horses in person.

Businesses come to the greater Reno area treating the wild mustang as their mascot. Tourists come from all around the world just to catch a glimpse of the wild mustangs running freely in their home range. Wild mustangs are an emblem in our society and ingrained in our culture at so many levels. Since we are the State with over half the Nation's wild mustangs, it seems hard to understand why we would not stand alongside the other 14 states to honor this history by electing a State horse to celebrate. As it is, they are represented throughout the State in local architecture, street names and even on our State quarter. Today, I ask you to recognize wild mustangs and their legacy in Nevada by voting yes on S.B. 90. I am proud to work for an organization such as the American Wild Horse Campaign that cares about the horses' well-being and management.

SENA LOYD (Director of Public Policy, Blockchains, Inc.):

I am submitting my written testimony ([Exhibit D](#)) in support of S.B. 90.

SUZANNE BAKER:

I have lived in Carson City eight years and am a retired educator. Wild horses embody the symbol of freedom. As an educator, to have these horses running free is just incredible. The two top reasons people visit Nevada are Lake Tahoe and wild horses. People from all over the world come here to see this symbol. I am asking all of you to vote for S.B. 90.

LORI LEE:

I live in the Fish Springs area of Gardnerville, Nevada. I have no formal affiliation with any group. I am speaking as a resident who was attracted in the 1990s to the Fish Springs area, partly because of the wild horses that symbolize the "Wild West," which many identify as northern Nevada. When I bought my property in 2001, I loved the fact the horses came right up to the house. It was part of the lifestyle for those of us who appreciate coexistence. As someone else has already mentioned, when it comes to talking with friends, they always ask when they can visit and see the horses? Everyone identifies Nevada with the horses, at least in my circle. When I tell people I live in Gardnerville, Nevada, their immediate reply is "the Pine Nut horses." They like to hear the stories. I can speak from firsthand experience that many people from across the Nation follow these horses and associate wild horses and mustangs with Nevada. It makes sense to me that when we have an opportunity to say this iconic animal is our State horse, it is a positive representation of what Nevada is about. That is my advocacy for S.B. 90.

MONICA ROSS (Volunteer Ambassador, American Wild Horse Campaign):

As a native Nevadan, I support S.B. 90. Making the mustang the State horse is about preserving a symbol of beauty and keeping a piece of Nevada's history alive. Nevada has more wild horses than any other state in the west. Mustangs are the last remaining symbols of the true Wild West and represent wild and free Nevada. The wild mustang enriches so many people's lives and entices people to bring businesses to our State, creating jobs and promoting tourism. Nevada has a State bird and a State flower. The people of Nevada chose the mustang to appear on the State quarter. I urge you to vote in favor of S.B. 90 preserving our pioneer spirit of the West and making the mustang our State horse.

ELAINE PROFFITT:

I have traveled a lot, both nationally and internationally, and when people find out I am from Nevada, they often ask about the wild horses. They mention they would like to come to Nevada to see the horses. I invite them to Nevada. People coming to see the wild horses is a wonderful thing for our economy. I am blessed to have six of my own horses and people come to see mine and then go out to the range to take photographs and to educate themselves about the horses. Our wild horses are the perfect symbol for Nevada. We have people travel from all over the world to see them on our ranges. The horses represent freedom, strength, power and endurance; just what Nevada is about. Their beauty and their power complement our land. People are in awe of these wild horses. They see the beauty; they see how God blessed them to cover and protect the mountains. I have submitted my testimony ([Exhibit E](#)).

RACHEL HOLZER-ROBINSON:

I have been a resident in Las Vegas for about 30 years. Seeing the wild horses has become a regular part of my week. I go to Mount Charleston or Blue Diamond to see them. They truly are a symbol of Nevada and the American Wild West. They embody our motto of Battle Born because they truly are. They have been here for over 500 years, and they survived everything from roundup efforts, slaughter and drought, and they endure as we endure. I urge you to support S.B. 90 so we can have a wild horse as our symbol.

CHAIR PAZINA:

We will now hear testimony in opposition.

MENDY ELLIOTT (City of Fernley):

It is hard to compete against fourth graders and Lacey J. Dalton, but I am going to give it my best effort. The City of Fernley has some concerns. Fernley currently encompasses a portion of the Virginia Range, which is under the direction of the State Department of Agriculture. In August 2019, the Department signed an agreement with a nonprofit volunteer group, Wild Horse Connection, to manage the herds. The agreement included female birth control, removal of feral horses from roadways and other congested areas.

As introduced, the City of Fernley has concerns about the unintended consequences of making the wild mustangs the official State horse. How will it impact the current management of the herd? Could it negatively impact the Fernley community? The feral horses of the Virginia Range inundate the City of Fernley each winter.

The City has one animal control officer. Last year, she worked with the Wild Horse Campaign to document the movement of over 30 feral horses into the area, which spans Fernley from Truckee Lane to Out-of-Town Park.

These horses are captured and relocated to areas outside of the populated areas of Fernley. Wild Horse Connection is staffed by volunteers and it frequently takes about six hours to respond to calls for assistance. Last year, we had reports of people attempting to ride, pet, feed and even shoot the horses. People who attempt to feed or handle these feral animals may be injured or, worst-case scenario, killed. Last year on Highway 50 Alternate in the 55-mile-an-hour zone near Out-of-Town Park, a horse was hit by a car and died. The horses have caused severe damage to the City of Fernley Park. Staff has had to spend numerous hours fixing damaged irrigation and turf. We have issued warnings for the past several years regarding the horses.

The City of Fernley would very much appreciate it if the Legislative Counsel Bureau could confirm there are no unintended consequences with these bills. This is a public safety issue for the City of Fernley.

ZACH RHODES:

I want to commend the fourth graders who came in and spoke. I visited the Legislature in the third grade, and I am now age 34. I am a fourth-generation Nevadan, and I have lived my life around horses. I am a cowboy through and through. Part of being a cowboy is being a good steward of the land and its

animals, especially horses. I have worked with our livestock roundup. I have seen firsthand the starvation of horses and horses dying of thirst. It is, quite honestly, terribly sad, and I agree with the sentiments of what the people before me have said. No doubt the wild horse or the mustang is a symbol of Nevada. But I urge this body to consider driving to the Virginia Range to see the condition of these horses and the wildlife because they are suffering. I have had to pull the trigger on numerous mustangs in my valley that have been hit by cars. I have assisted people who are injured by them because they are feeding them on the side of the road. Quite frankly, there are too many, and I cannot tell you how bad it is to have to pull the trigger and look the horse in the eyes while you are doing it. I urge you to consider that, if this bill is passed, you are condoning the mismanagement of horses.

TINA NAPPE:

I have submitted my testimony ([Exhibit F](#)) in opposition to S.B. 90.

SHELDON MUDD (Executive Director, Northeastern Nevada Regional Development Authority):

I am a resident of Lander County. I am here in opposition to the bill primarily because of what was mentioned by Senator Goicoechea and alluded to by Senator Flores. There are no stipulations regarding management in this bill. I have heard many stories this afternoon about freedom and what the wild horse symbolizes. But let me tell you what I did not see in Lacey J. Dalton's video; I did not see a single rib, not one. But when you go in my backyard in Lander County, or travel in my Jeep, or fly in my brother-in-law's airplane, you would see quite a different image. You would see emaciated horses and you would see crippled horses. I see horses fighting for a blade of grass; I see riparian areas that are destroyed. I do not see deer anymore. I seldom see antelope like we used to.

I am afraid a bill such as this, without stipulations for management, will send the wrong message throughout the State and especially to our federal partners. The bill will likely say we are happy and satisfied with the way management is done and happy and satisfied with the current ecosystem and conditions of the western range.

SENATOR HANSEN:

Mr. Mudd is one of my constituents. You can see the riparian damage in the pictures from NDOW. These pictures are from Lander County. Everybody should

take a close look at them because you will see the type of riparian damage Mr. Mudd was describing.

ASHTON CASELLI (Director, Northern Nevada Safari Club International; Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife; Coalition for Nevada Healthy Lands):
I have submitted my testimony ([Exhibit G](#)) in opposition to S.B. 90.

CHAIR PAZINA:

For those giving testimony, remember to be respectful of the 9- and 10-year-old students who are here listening to this today. We would very much appreciate it that, when you are giving testimony, it must be lawful or it is a misdemeanor.

JOEL BLAKESEE (Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife; Coalition for Nevada Healthy Lands):

I love horses. I earned my living with one for years and years. I worked in range management. I know about native plants, water sheds and soils.

I want to applaud the kids for showing up. I mean, who can go against kids? They are wonderful, but they need to get an education while they are here. My concern with this bill is the message it sends to the other 49 landlords of our public lands and the owners of wild horses. The implication here is everything is fine and dandy in Nevada, and it is not fine and dandy in Nevada. Our range resources have been ruined. It is wonderful to love a horse, but I love native plants and native animals. There must be a balance to this.

LARRY JOHNSON (President, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife):

I got my first horse at three years old, and the black Shetland stallion was the meanest horse I have ever laid my eyes on. I am a Native-American. I spent ten years on BLM's National Wild Horse Advisory Board as the Wildlife Representative. I know this issue, frontward and backward. Wild horses are five- and sometimes ten-times at the population levels our rangelands will support. That is extremely devastating. Range managers and wildlife biologists, and I hope one of you will call on the representative from NDOW to verify this. The wild horse often has the second greatest adverse impact to healthy wildlife populations next to wildfires. They double their population every three- to five-years. Wild horse advocates commonly sue to stop BLM from reducing populations down to appropriate management levels. An unintended consequence of this bill is to elevate this animal to a State horse and allow

horse advocacy groups to continue that propaganda for fundraising for litigation purposes.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Could you support this bill if we could amend it and get language that talks about complying with the Wild Horses and Burros Act? Of course, clearly the feral horses are outside of the Act. But can you support the bill making the mustang an icon of Nevada with language that, in fact, talks about managing and let us go back to the Act that says appropriate management levels cannot be exceeded?

MR. JOHNSON:

Eureka County is in opposition to the bill mostly for the reasons that have been stated. First, the Virginia Range horses are feral. They do not fit under the Act. Second is the fact that there is no management criteria in this bill. I was raised a cowboy. I have roped wild horses and worked with them on federal range land. The fact is, they are destroying our native ranges. We must include management wording in the bill.

The Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act was amended in 1973. It states the BLM shall manage these horses in an ecological balance with the range lands to support all other users, including our native wildlife species. In S.B. 90, the 1973 amendment needs to be referenced. The amendment also says that the BLM, when removing these horses, shall attempt to adopt and find good homes for these horses, and they shall dispose of the animals that are not adopted. That is what the law reads. I wish we would simply follow the law as far as supporting language. Unfortunately, the State does not have the teeth to enforce federal management policies with the budget necessary to remove excess horses to appropriate management levels. And even so, that would be on federal land, and much of the Virginia Range is on private land.

SENATOR HANSEN:

Larry, you and I have known each other for a long time. I represent a whole bunch of Indian areas. From what I can tell, tribes are opposed to this bill. The bottom line is this is an invasive species. They are not indigenous; they are harming the native wildlife. As a Native American yourself, is that an accurate statement? I have not had any positive contact from any of the Native American tribes I represent about the wild horses.

MR. JOHNSON:

That is an extremely true statement. Following the Perry Fire, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe gathered excess horses so they could restore their rangeland and were sued by horse advocates.

SENATOR HANSEN:

The native peoples in Nevada do not want to see a non-native species become the State symbol.

GIANNA CASELLI:

I am a senior at Reno High School as well as an avid sportsman and conservationist. My personal experience is when you are in the field and experiencing the rangelands of Nevada, you can see firsthand the amount of damage caused by this population of wild horses. I am asking you not to pass S.B. 90.

LYDIA TEEL (Nevada Bighorns Unlimited):

For the last 40 years, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited has been instrumental in the reintroduction of bighorn sheep, our State animal, into more than 60 mountain ranges throughout Nevada. One of those mountain ranges is the Virginia Range, where our native desert bighorn sheep were reintroduced in 2011. Normally, reintroduction of bighorn sheep does quite well with sustainable populations. However, there are fewer than 150 adult bighorn sheep left in the Virginia Range.

There is about a 90 percent mortality rate of lambs because of lack of forage and because their mothers are in poor health and body condition. We have all heard that the count by aerial surveys conducted in the Virginia Range shows 3,600 wild horses with an appropriate management level in the hundreds. Based on the amount of forage they eat and the water they drink and their biomass, 3,600 wild horses equate to over 25,000 bighorn sheep, yet there are fewer than 200 bighorn sheep living in the Virginia Range today.

Where is the equality of both species who are supposed to live in harmony? Our State animal is suffering from the adverse effects imposed upon them by horses. How can we have a State symbol indirectly impacting our other State symbols like Desert Bighorn Sheep, Indian Ricegrass, Sagebrush, the Mountain Bluebird and even the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout? Wild horses destroy the lifeblood of our State and our precious and limited riparian areas. This bill is

focused on one thing and nowhere is there an appreciation or understanding of all the other resources and living things affected by excessive horse use of the land. We cannot be blind to the broader consequences and these decisions cannot happen in a vacuum. We must have mutual respect for the environment.

CHLOE CROOKSHANKS:

I am here to testify against S.B. 90. When populations are at an extreme, as we see in Nevada, and no management is happening with the feral horses, they compete with native wildlife species and domestic livestock. They compete for water and they compete for forage. Horses are known to camp out at places with water and use it up before native species or livestock get a chance to drink. They eat native vegetation and when they do so, they facilitate the invasion of non-native species like cheatgrass to germinate quicker and take over the area. When cheatgrass invades like that, it increases the chances of wildfires, which affects species such as native Nevada trout. When horses trample riparian systems, it increases sedimentation and water temperatures. It makes this habitat unsuitable for aquatic species to survive and thrive. I would suggest honoring something like the American Quarter Horse that was very influential in the American West and in starting the State of Nevada on ranches and cowboying. That has value to our State. I do not think feral horses should be honored, as they do not add any value to our ecosystems.

WES REYNOLDS:

I am a senior at a high school in Reno, Nevada. I oppose S.B. 90. I spend more time with the wildlife of Nevada than most people and see how much these wild horses affect wildlife. I see what they do to our wildlife habitat. We should not give such recognition to the mustang that does not deserve it. These horses are beautiful. I am on board with that; but I do not see recognizing them because of the damage these animals cause to our environment and to our wildlife.

SHERMAN SWANSON:

I am an Emeritus Professor at the University of Nevada, Reno. I spent my career as a range extension specialist and then as a riparian extension specialist for Nevada. The wild horse issue has been on the docket for decades at many meetings I have attended. It is a complex issue. After I retired, I woke up most mornings for a year and a half, trying to figure out how to communicate this complex issue. This bill is all about sustainability. We could have a sustainable wild horse population, but this bill does not take us in that direction because it does not communicate the whole complex issue. We need to understand wild

horses are damaging habitats. When I took my first range management class, the textbook said any place close to water is a sacrifice zone.

In the 1970s and 1980s, we realized three-quarters of our wildlife spend an important part of their life at riparian areas, and those riparian areas must act like a sponge to provide water to the wildlife and the habitat that those wildlife species need. We know how to manage them. I have spent my career trying to figure that out; many of us are on the same page with livestock. It is all about the movement of livestock. By law, we cannot move free-roaming horses. What do we do? We must manage them with the one tool we have in the toolbox—appropriate management levels—and this bill says nothing about that. In fact, it misleads us into thinking we could use darting as if it would work in a 102 large, scattered and very remote herd-management areas across Nevada. Darting cannot be effective at reducing these large populations on the land.

GIOVANI CASELLI:

I am a freshman at Reno High School. As a native of Nevada and a conservationist, I have spent plenty of time in the field and witnessed wild horses. They are beautiful, but they do damage to other species and other habitat. I have hunted in the Scripps Wildlife Management Area multiple times this year, and I can tell you the first thing I noticed is that wild horses trash the area. I am asking you to oppose this bill.

DOUG BUSSELMAN (Executive Vice President, Nevada Farm Bureau):
I have provided testimony ([Exhibit H](#)) in opposition to S.B. 90.

WILLIAM MOLINI (Director, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife):

I am a native Nevadan. I worked for the NDOW for 30 years and was director for over 16 years. As everyone says, we all like horses. The group Coalition for Healthy Nevada Lands, Wildlife & Free-Roaming Horses opposes S.B. 90. There are too many horses for the landscape to support them. It is that simple. Nevada has 63 percent of the total horse population in the U.S. We are at ground zero for the problems they cause. The appropriate management levels are determined by the BLM, and the level for Nevada is 13,000 horses. We now have 52,000 horses on BLM lands. It is simple mathematics—too many animals with too much demand for forage and water and competition for all the other over 700 native species of wildlife that depend on our lands. Simply put, we cannot support the number of horses there today.

CARLY HOLST:

We are confronting a problem. We are not necessarily saying wild horses should not be the symbol of our State because they are amazing wild animals and have great symbolism. The concern is that these wild animals are hurting our State and do not benefit the indigenous wildlife who need help. I oppose this bill.

KAREN BOEGER:

I am a member of the boards of three different conservation groups and part of the Coalition for Healthy Nevada Lands Wildlife & Free-Roaming Horses. I am not speaking for any of those groups. I have spoken with each of you individually. I am a retired elementary school teacher who is broken-hearted; I oppose this bill. It is not increasing the education of students or the humane situation for those beautiful horses the students love and admire. I have been speaking with some of the rural county people and students, and they wanted to have a chance to speak to you, but unfortunately, the connection could not get set up. Those children have the advantage of living and growing up in rural areas, and they see what is happening to the land. They understand because their science classes and school curriculum from Future Farmers of America and others teach them about habitat and water. I want to see every fourth-grade student receive that education.

CHAIR PAZINA:

We have exceeded the 30-minute time allotment, but since we had some questions, I will allow 2 more testifiers before we go to the phone lines.

STEVE WALKER (Eureka County):

Eureka County is in opposition to the bill for the reasons previously stated. The Virginia Range horses are feral and do not fit under the Wild Horses and Burros Act. There are no management criteria in the bill. I was raised a cowboy; I have roped wild horses and worked with them on federal rangeland and I know the horses well. The fact is, they are destroying our native ranges and we must manage the destruction.

ASSEMBLYMAN BERT GURR (Assembly District No. 33):

District 33 represents most of the rural and eastern parts of Nevada. Until you get out there and look at what is happening to the eastern part of the State, do not name wild mustangs as the State horse. In 1974, the first study was done on damage that horses do to the range. When feeding on the soft ground, they pull the plants out; they do not just chew them; they pull them out. We took the

information to the Nevada Wildlife Federation Inc. and they took it to the National Federation. That was when there were fewer horses on the ground. Now, that number is gigantic. There is a big flat we call "The U" by Spruce Mountain. There must be 4,000 horses there. We were hunting elk out there two years ago. Now the horses feed at 10,000 feet because they cannot find anything to eat at lower elevations.

This bill is probably coming to the Assembly, but I would be happier if it stopped in the Senate. There is no need to memorialize something that is not here. There are no mustangs left on that range. If you want to take a picture of the horse and put it on something; that is fine. But if you are out there and look, you will see damage you will not believe.

CHAIR PAZINA:

Is there anyone on the phone in opposition?

BRIANNA MERRILL (Rangeland and Water Quality Specialist, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe):

I have submitted my testimony ([Exhibit I](#)) in opposition to S.B. 90.

SENATOR HANSEN:

I would like to note that Ms. Merrill was a representative of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in opposition to S.B. 90.

CHAIR PAZINA:

We recognize we have had two people from tribes speak today, but they do not speak for every Native-American member in the State.

DAVID MCNINCH (Board of Wildlife Commission):

The Nevada Board of Wildlife Commission has not had an opportunity to take a formal position as a full Body. However, we do have a Legislative Committee of the Commission that has taken a position to recommend opposition to S.B. 90 in its current form. A lot of what has been said would reflect the sentiments of the Commission. The Committee has consistently advocated for management of wild horses and burros to appropriate management levels. The number of horses is high. They do have an impact on wildlife habitats and the wild horses themselves. We are concerned about the unintentional consequences. Designating the wild mustang as a State horse could complicate the efforts to bring their numbers down to appropriate management levels.

My hat is off to the students of Doral Academy; it is a tough business getting up in front of folks and talking, and they did a fantastic job. It is not a stretch for me to offer to take those interested in seeing some native wildlife, mainly bighorn sheep. I will put my name out there as willing to get people in the field so they can see one in the wild.

FAITH MACHUCA (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service):

I have lived in Nevada my entire life, and I do not get fired up about politics often, but I am calling today to testify against this proposed legislation. The text argues that mustangs symbolize the history and culture of Nevada. Still, to those who know the history of natural resources in this Country, mustangs symbolize the failures of pioneer ranching to maintain their domesticated livestock. Because, unlike what the legislation states, the horses within the U.S. are not wild but, in fact, feral animals comparable to stray cats. To anyone taking a close look, feral horses can easily be identified. These diseased animals are severely over populated in our State, imposing a burden on land management agencies, modern Nevada industry, and native flora and fauna.

CHAIR PAZINA:

We will let you continue in just one moment, but a reminder that the nine- and ten-year-old students were brought to the Committee today, so please be respectful of them.

MS. MACHUCA:

This legislation is a direct slap in the face to the conservationists in this Country who dedicate their lives to protecting America's amazing native species for future generations. Legislation like this perpetuates the perception that feral horses are good for the landscape and deserve protection. Leadership, in this case, must not allow this proposal to move further. Further, idolizing invasive non-native species is a disastrous and ignorant proposition. I invite you to do some research on this matter.

CHAIR PAZINA:

Again, when we are trying to convey respect to the nine- and ten-year-old students, ignorance is definitely not the word I would use. Let us give a big round of applause to the nine- and ten-year-old students who brought this legislation here today and bravely spoke out.

MARK FREESE (Habitat Staff Specialist, Nevada Department of Wildlife):

I was not going to testify, but I will take the invitation from Senator Hansen and go over some biological implications for wildlife species. Earlier today, I looked at the 2022 BLM population estimates. It said 73 percent of the herd areas and herd-management areas in the State exceed appropriate management levels. The median is 353 percent over appropriate management levels. That is a little context about the situation.

Horse biology plays into the interaction and ecology with wildlife. Horses are single digesters; wildlife are ruminants. It allows horses to feed on lower quality forage; they have an elongated neck, and upper and lower incisors, whereas our native wildlife big game species only have lower incisors and an upper maxillary pad. In addition, the horses' size helps them to be the most socially dominant in our native rangelands. So, all have implications for our wildlife.

One of the implications is the exclusion of water resources. It has been shown repeatedly that horses limit or exclude native wildlife from water resources. Researchers have reported horses averted elk from accessing water 81 percent of the time in their study, Stacey Ostermann-Kelm found bighorn sheep groups declined by 76 percent at water locations associated with the increase in horse numbers. Caitlin Gooch found pronghorn invested more time in vigilant behavior and less time foraging and drinking in the presence of horses. For every 50 percent increase in appropriate management levels, sage grouse declined by 50 percent. There are other impacts on lizards, snakes, amphibians, birds and other species. We are also interested in habitat issues when horses are over appropriate management levels, particularly on perennial bunch grasses, which are the stronghold for keeping cheatgrass at bay. We have problems with cheatgrass throughout the State, as many of you are aware, compromising our sage brush ecosystems.

CHAIR PAZINA:

It is wonderful so many fourth graders in northern Nevada took this opportunity to get involved in civic engagement and the legislative process. Especially the class who brought this bill to the Natural Resources Committee. We are thrilled to have them here. They were very eloquent and did a gorgeous job. I will also be happy to share with the Committee the many letters in [Exhibit C](#) written by students who did not have the opportunity to speak today. With that said, would any of the presenters like to provide any closing remarks?

MS. WILSON:

I want to remind everybody this is a designation. It is not even appropriate to put protections into a designation, it is simply a designation. I had the opportunity to go up in an airplane and fly over the top of the Virginia Range. I only mention the Virginia Range because that is the range with which I am quite familiar. In my time in the air, on two separate occasions flying over the range, I saw cows laying around a water source. Not once did I see a horse standing in a water source, laying in a water source or keeping other animals away from a water source. In fact, one of our volunteers has photographs and video of bighorn sheep out at Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center chasing horses away from a water source so that they could drink. I am not discounting anybody else's observations or the science they are presenting, but I am presenting real life observations of what I see out there. Again, just a reminder this is a designation about an animal important to the State and the history of the State.

CHAIR PAZINA:

The hearing on S.B. 90 is closed.

Our final order of business today is public comment. As a reminder, public comment will not revolve around Senate Bill 90. We have had the opportunity to hear testimony in support in opposition and in neutral. This is for pure public comment that has nothing to do with S.B. 90.

MR. FRENCH:

I appreciate all I have heard and learned at this meeting. One of my main concerns are the habitats and the wildlife in Carson City. I could go on and on about every time they start to close places that were normal habitats for hundreds of distinct species. I think this has given me an opportunity to see that we all need to consider the native habitat.

MR. SWANSON:

Because this is the Senate Natural Resources Committee and you are concerned about the natural resources management of all of Nevada, I thought you might be interested in a study my graduate students did over the last four or five years. They took 1.7 million time-lapse photographs of riparian meadows in allotments across Nevada in sage grouse habitat and herd-management areas. They found that the livestock are using riparian areas 30 times more per acre than the rest of their allotment. Wild horses are using them 51 times more. This

Senate Committee on Natural Resources
March 7, 2023
Page 29

is about something this Committee obviously will have to address—our natural resources of the critical habitat.

MS. MERRILL:

I would just like to remind everybody that collaboration between tribes is encouraged in accordance with A.B. No. 264 of the 80th Session.

Remainder of page intentionally left blank; signature page to follow.

Senate Committee on Natural Resources
March 7, 2023
Page 30

CHAIR PAZINA:

We received a letter of opposition ([Exhibit J](#)) to S.B. 90 from the Knudsen Family and letters of support from Ann Sweder ([Exhibit K](#)) and from U.S. Congresswoman Dina Titus ([Exhibit L](#)).

Having no further business, we adjourn this meeting at 5:28 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Donna Crawford Kennedy,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Julie Pazina, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Introduced on Minute Report Page No.	Witness / Entity	Description
S.B. 90	A	1		Agenda
S.B. 90	B	1		Attendance Roster
S.B. 90	C	6	Doral Academy	Letters of Support
gS.B. 90	D	15	Sena Loyd Blockchains, Inc.	Testimony in Support
S.B. 90	E	16	Elaine Proffitt	Testimony and Letter of Support
S.B. 90	F	18	Tina Nappe	Testimony in Opposition
S.B. 90	G	19	Ashton Caselli	Testimony in Opposition
S.B. 90	H	23	Doug Busselman Nevada Farm Bureau Federation	Testimony in Opposition
S.B. 90	I	25	Brianna Merrill	Testimony in Opposition
S.B. 90	J	30	Knudsen Family	Letter of Opposition
S.B. 90	K	30	Ann Sweder	Letter of Support
S.B. 90	L	30	U.S. Congresswoman Dina Titus	Letter of Support