

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mary Geiger, 202-879-9138 or [mgeiger@beef.org](mailto:mgeiger@beef.org)

**PLC Supports BLM Decision to Deny Pickens' Proposal for Wild Horse Eco-Sanctuary**

WASHINGTON (Jan. 28, 2011) – The [Public Lands Council](#) (PLC) yesterday, Jan. 27, 2011, sent a letter to Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bob Abbey supporting BLM's response to a prospectus submitted by Madeleine Pickens' Saving America's Mustangs Foundation (the Foundation) to build and establish an eco-sanctuary for wild horses. PLC President John Falen said the problem of wild horse overpopulation is one that must be dealt with but that creating a horse sanctuary will not solve the problem.

“Wild horse overpopulation poses a threat not only to the health of the range, the rural economies and families making a living off the land, but also to the wild horses themselves,” Falen said. “However, the Foundation's proposal is not the right solution, and we're glad the BLM shares our concerns. In addition to sharing BLM's concerns regarding the nuts and bolts of the proposal with respect to title transfer of the wild horses, the cost of the proposal and the range's ability to sustain 10,000 horses, we also question the accuracy of some claims the Foundation and Madeleine Pickens made regarding livestock grazing on public lands.”

According to the letter, PLC opposes any agreement that would include increasing any herd management area (HMA) or inflating appropriate management levels (AMLs) beyond what the resources can sustain. Expansion of HMAs to new areas would require an amendment to the Free-Roaming Wild Horse & Burro Act of 1971 and would pose a threat to multiple-use on public lands, the letter says. It goes on to say that converting livestock Animal Unit Months (AUMs) or livestock grazing permits to single-use horse permits or sanctuaries for wild horses would violate the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, thereby jeopardizing grazing permits and presenting opportunities for anti-grazing interests to push for more conversion of livestock allotments to other single-uses.

Falen said that while PLC does not believe the overpopulation issue can or should be solved by expanding HMAs or converting livestock grazing permits, the organization supports using science and research to find new effective ways of decreasing the reproduction rate of the entire herd.

“Decreasing the reproduction rate of the herd is a viable option that should be considered as BLM works to improve the wild horse and burro program,” Falen said. “BLM made the right decision to deny the Foundation's proposal for a horse sanctuary, and we look forward to working with Director Abbey and others at BLM to find a sustainable, sensible solution for wild horse management.”

###

Letter Attached.