

Legislative Issues

Federal Ban on Slaughtering Horses for Human Consumption

Introduction

There have been two bills introduced in the United States House of Representatives that would prohibit the slaughter of horses for human consumption.

Reynolds Bill – H.R. 2622

In August 2001, Representative Tom Reynolds (R-NY) introduced, the “Helping Out to Rescue and Save Equines Act” (H.R. 2622). This bill prohibits the interstate transport of horses (other than downed animals) for the purpose of slaughter or horse flesh for human consumption. The legislation also sets forth related inspection, confiscation, and penalty provisions, including rescue facility grants.

This bill has been referred to the House Agriculture Committee. Hearings have not been scheduled. Currently there are seven co-sponsors of this legislation.

If enacted this bill would give the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to confiscate any horse that was transported to slaughter. If a person is found transporting a horse to slaughter that person would be fined \$5,000 per horse being transported. Under the law there are other fines an individual may have to pay, such as the cost paid by the government to confiscate the horse as well as transporting, boarding and veterinary fees, if applicable. Under this law rescue facilities, which must be non-profit organizations, will be eligible for grants and government funding up to the amounts of fines levied and collected against violators.

Morella Bill – H.R. 3781

On February 14, 2002 Congresswoman Connie Morella (R-MD) introduced “The American Horse Slaughter Protection Act” (H.R. 3781). If enacted, this bill would also prohibit the slaughter of horses for human consumption and ban the trade and transport of horse flesh and live horses intended for human consumption. This bill has been referred to the House Agriculture, the House International Relations, and the House Ways and Means Committees. No hearings have been scheduled.

Currently, there are twenty-five co-sponsors of this legislation.

The bill provides for criminal and civil penalties up to \$5,000 or imprisonment for up to one year for violations. Horses bound for processing facilities may be confiscated under this bill and placed in the care of animal rescue facilities. If a person is convicted or unable to post bond, those horses will be permanently placed by the animal rescue facility. If the horses are unable to be placed with a permanent home, they will be euthanized by the animal rescue facility.

AHC Position

The AHC is presently determining whether there is a consensus among its member organizations on this legislation.