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December 20, 1995

Mr. Gene Draiss
Egan Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408

Subject: Appeal - Diamond Hills South Herd Gather Plan/EA

Dear Mr. Draiss:

STATEMENT OF REASONS

The Railroad Pass Allotment Multiple Use Decision established an appropriate management level of 22 horses for the entire Diamond Hills South Herd. This decision calls for over a 80 percent reduction of wild horses, but allows for approximately 100 percent increase in livestock "active use" that occurred from 1988 to 1992.

The Commission has appealed the Railroad Pass Allotment Wild Horse Decision. Based upon the merits of this appeal, the Commission appeals the Decision for Diamond Hills South HMA Removal that would cause irreparable harm to the genetic integrity of this wild horse herd.

PETITION FOR A STAY

The Decision implements actions that can jeopardize the genetic viability of the Diamond Hills South Herd.

Bureau of Land Management wild horse decisions have established 50 head as a minimum viable herd. The Decision implements a gather to reduce the herd to 19 head. The Decision also implements a general policy of the Strategic Plan for Management of Wild Horses and Burros on Public Lands. Plan objectives are to maintain adoptable horses in the program and does not apply to maintaining a genetic viability in herds on public lands as provided for in the Wild Horse and Burro Act. The gather plan implements actions that jeopardies the Diamond Hills South Herd.

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The Environmental Assessment is inadequate.

No data have been provided to assure genetic exchange has or will occur with adjacent herd areas. No data have been provided to assure that 50 horses will be managed for between the herd management areas affected by this Decision.

Implementation of the Railroad Pass Allotment Multiple Use Decision and Diamond Hills South Removal Plan will not protect rangelands.

Based upon the merits of the Commission's appeal to the Railroad Pass Allotment Multiple Use Decision, wild horses removed from this allotment will be replaced with livestock. The allotment carrying capacity was inflated to support livestock numbers that have not been permitted on the allotment during the years monitored and evaluated by the Bureau of Land Management.

A stay of this action will not cause any further harm to wild horse habitat than under existing conditions.

Sincerely,

CATHERINE BARCOMB
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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