



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Washington, D.C. 20240

February 14, 1997

Ms. Catherine Barcomb
Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses
1105 Terminal Way, Suite 209
Reno, Nevada 89502

Dear Cathy:

Thank you for your letter of January 28, 1997, cosigned by Ms. Dawn Lappin, regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) administration of the Wild Horse and Burro Program. I appreciate your effort to provide us with extensive documentation of apparent wrongdoing and/or problems in the administration of the Wild Horse and Burro Program in many of the BLM Districts in Nevada over the past ten years or so.

The allegations in your letter are serious, and we have begun a process that will give them the serious attention that they deserve. We are studying your letter in order to distinguish programmatic, policy, procedural, and management issues from issues of wrongdoing, ethical violations or potentially criminal behavior. We will refer all of your information concerning the latter issues to the Office of the Inspector General with a request for the OIG to review and investigate the cases you have called to our attention. Issues in the former category will be reviewed in detail by BLM, with the goal of correcting deficiencies in management practices, staffing, training, guidance, policy, and procedures on national, state, and field levels.

You have provided us with a great deal of information, and it will take time for us to look, in detail, into each of the issues you have raised. But I can assure you that we will devote the time and effort needed to thoroughly investigate these allegations.

As I know you are aware, the BLM shares your commitment to the welfare of the nation's wild horses and burros and the proper administration of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act. We are committed to implementing the recommendations of the recently released *Wild Horse and Burro Evaluation*, as well as seeking solutions to other challenges the program faces. Several task forces or special teams have been formed to offer recommendations in other areas of the program. We welcome your comments on the work of these teams and on all aspects of the program. Your input, advice, and information are an important contribution to the shared effort to protect wild herds, their habitats, and the animals we have had to remove from the range.

Sincerely,

Maitland Sharpe
Assistant Director
Renewable Resources and Planning