

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION establishing the Free-roaming Horse Task Force.

WHEREAS, as a result of the economic downturn of 2007 through 2009 and continuing poor economic conditions for some horse owners in the Commonwealth, the population of free-roaming horses in Kentucky has grown; and

WHEREAS, untended horses face illness, malnourishment, and neglect when they are abandoned, a cycle which continues for generations when they are left to breed in the wild; and

WHEREAS, it is illegal for a horse owner to abandon a horse in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, free-roaming, unmanaged horses can create public safety challenges for communities across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, large populations of free-roaming horses are now congregating on reclaimed mine sites, stripping them of vegetation and necessitating the replanting of that lost vegetation to maintain the environmental benefits to the reclamation site and surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS, recent legislative efforts have been positive steps towards humanely managing the free-roaming horse population in the Commonwealth, but more can be done; and

WHEREAS, horses are symbolic animals in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly finds that convening a task force of various stakeholder groups and representatives of state and local government is necessary and appropriate to produce consensus legislative recommendations for addressing the humane management of free-roaming horses in the Commonwealth;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Senate concurring therein:

➔Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission is hereby directed to establish the Free-roaming Horse Task Force to study and develop consensus legislative recommendations to address the problems caused by the current population of free-roaming horses in the Commonwealth and to curb the future growth of that population.

➔Section 2. The task force shall be composed of the following members, with final membership of the task force being subject to the consideration and approval of the Legislative Research Commission:

(1) The chair of the House Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Environment to serve as co-chair;

(2) The chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Energy to serve as co-chair;

(3) Two additional members of the Senate, one to be appointed by the President of the Senate, and one to be appointed by the Minority Floor Leader of the Senate;

(4) Two additional members of the House of Representatives, one to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one to be appointed by the Minority Floor Leader of the House of Representatives;

(5) The chair of the Kentucky Horse Park Commission, or the chair's designee;

(6) The commissioner of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, or the commissioner's designee;

(7) The Commissioner of Agriculture, or the Commissioner's designee;

(8) The president of the Kentucky Coal Association, or the president's designee;

(9) The state veterinarian, or the veterinarian's designee;

(10) The president of the Appalachian Wildlife Federation, or the president's designee;

(11) The secretary of the Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet, or the secretary's designee;

(12) The executive director of the Kentucky Horse Council, or the executive

director's the designee;

(13) A Kentucky County Judge/Executive, to be chosen by the president of the Kentucky County Judge/Executive Association;

(14) An expert in bonding for mine reclamation, to be chosen upon agreement of the co-chairs; and

(15) A representative of shelters within the Commonwealth for abandoned horses, to be chosen upon agreement of the co-chairs.

➔Section 3. The task force shall meet at least three times between the effective date of this Resolution and the date that it submits its legislative recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission.

➔Section 4. The task force shall submit its legislative recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the appropriate committee or committees by November 30, 2016.

➔Section 5. Provisions of this Resolution to the contrary notwithstanding, the Legislative Research Commission shall have the authority to alternatively assign the issues identified herein to an interim joint committee or subcommittee thereof and to designate a study completion date.