

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Postal: \_\_\_\_\_

Office of the Premier  
Attn: Premier Stelmach  
Room 307, Legislature Building  
10800 - 97th Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Office of the Prime Minister  
Attn: Prime Minister Harper  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Premier Stelmach and Prime Minister Harper;

On April 28, 2009 three wild horses were found shot to death in the Foothills of Central Alberta. These were a pregnant mare, her yearling colt and a young stud. The colt was shot in the chest and ran up a hill for about 100 feet before collapsing. The stud had been shot in his stomach, and suffered a long agonizing death. His head was caught between two trees when he fell. The mare looked ready to foal within a day or two, and appeared to have gone into labour after she was shot, as her birthing sack was visible when she was found.

The RCMP and wildlife authorities are investigating the killings. There is the belief that these horses were shot from a nearby road with a high-powered rifle. The death of these three raises the total to 24 wild horses found violently shot to death in this area since 2002. How many others have been killed and not discovered or reported is anyone's guess.

Senseless violence perpetrated against wild horses is a common occurrence in some parts of the United States, as exemplified by the 1998 "Reno Massacre" in Nevada, where thirty-four mustangs were gunned down. Canadians have come to think of our country as a kinder and gentler place than the US - maybe somewhat naively but well in sync with the world's perception of Canada. Considering that after all these deaths no one has ever been identified and charged with the crime, it is difficult not to perceive a "conspiracy of silence" and a disconcerting lack of determination and political will on the part of those investigating such events.

Back in the 1960's Sable Island became a federally protected reserve for the wild horses whereas, in Alberta, they are deemed feral and covered under the Stray Animals Act. Why the difference in treatment? In regards to the horses being labeled feral by the provincial and federal governments what studies have been done to prove that they are indeed feral (domestic escapee's) and not wild.

Furthermore, there have been horse bones found in Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan, which were deemed to be 800 years old or older. The most recent find in the Yukon shows a horse that is radiocarbon dated  $26,280 \pm 210$  years BP. Hence this makes the horse indisputably indigenous, to not only Alberta but North America as well. In spite of all these scientific findings the federal and provincial governments still classify these horses as non-native. This biased attitude is totally unscientific, illogical, and unacceptable.

As a Canadian citizen I'm writing this letter to express my grave concern and that of thousands of others over these senseless acts of violence, which lead to the unconscionable deaths of these unique creatures. I am imploring the federal and provincial governments to do the right thing and reclassify the Alberta wild horses as a distinct species with their own special status, with protection comparable to that of other wildlife species, free of capture, harassment, abuse and death at the hands of man. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**    Month                  Day                  Year