

**NCSL Standing Committee on Natural Resources and
Infrastructure**

POLICY DIRECTIVES AND RESOLUTIONS

**2019 NCSL Capitol Forum
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1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: SAVING AMERICA'S POLLINATORS**

3 **TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, farmers depend on pollinator species such as bees, ants, butterflies, birds
5 and bats to successfully produce approximately one-third of the world's crop production;
6 and

7
8 **WHEREAS**, pollinator dependent foods include many fruit, vegetable, seed, nut and oil
9 crops, supplying important vitamins, minerals, and nutrients to humans; and

10
11 **WHEREAS**, pollinator loss poses a significant threat to United States agriculture and
12 the ability of farmers to feed a growing world population; and

13
14 **WHEREAS**, more than 40 pollinator species have been federally listed as threatened or
15 endangered; and

16
17 **WHEREAS**, scientists have linked the use of neonicotinoids, a class of systemic
18 insecticides, to the decline of pollinators and deterioration of pollinator health; and

19
20 **WHEREAS**, restrictions on the use of neonicotinoid pesticides and other efforts to
21 protect pollinators have been enacted in communities and states across the country;
22 and

23
24 **WHEREAS**, the Saving America's Pollinators Act of 2019 will provide the urgent and
25 necessary regulatory restrictions and review of certain pesticides for their toxicity to
26 pollinators.

27
28 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
29 Legislators urges the President of the United States and each member of Congress to
30 act to pass and sign into law the Saving America's Pollinators Act of 2019, and

31

32 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted
33 to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the
34 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: OFFSHORE DRILLING**

3 **TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, the proposed federal National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing
5 Program for 2019-2024 sought to expand oil and gas exploration, production, and
6 drilling in the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and Gulf of Mexico; and

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8 **WHEREAS**, the economies of coastal states and communities are supported by
9 tourism, the maritime sector, and fisheries; and

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11 **WHEREAS**, coastal states and communities have been previously impacted by spills
12 such as the BP Deepwater Horizon explosion that killed 11 people, caused a massive
13 oil spill that leaked 3.19 million barrels of oil and gas into the Gulf of Mexico for 87 days,
14 and resulted in \$247 million in losses to the commercial fishing industry; and

15

16 **WHEREAS**, the likelihood of a spill or accident occurring only increases if additional
17 areas of the coast are opened to offshore drilling; and

18

19 **WHEREAS**, the likelihood of a spill or accident occurring only increases with the
20 diminishment of regulatory oversight of offshore drilling activities; and

21

22 **WHEREAS**, in March 2019, U.S. District Judge Sharon Gleason in Alaska declared that
23 the Trump Administration's order to revoke an Obama era ban on oil and gas drilling in
24 certain areas of the Arctic and Atlantic oceans was illegal; and

25

26 **WHEREAS**, on April 25, 2019, the Department of Interior announced plans to open up
27 the Atlantic and Pacific coastline for offshore drilling have been indefinitely sidelined.
28 This was the result of a March ruling that blocked offshore drilling in the Arctic and
29 Atlantic; and

30

31 **WHEREAS** despite the Department of Interior’s decision to shelve its five-year leasing
32 plan, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management confirmed it will continue processing
33 permits for oil and gas exploration in the Atlantic Ocean, allowing companies to search
34 for oil and gas deposits using potentially harmful seismic air gun blasts; and

35
36 **WHEREAS** in May 2019, the Trump Administration announced a set of rollbacks on
37 safety regulations that were put in place following the BP Deepwater Horizon accident,
38 removing a requirement for third-party testing of safety equipment like blow-out
39 preventers, weakening requirements to maintain real-time onshore monitoring stations,
40 and reducing the reporting frequency of equipment failures and operational issues to
41 federal regulators.

42
43 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President of the United States and
44 the Secretary of the Department of Interior are urged to immediately halt the processing
45 of permits for oil and gas exploration in all coasts; and

46
47 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President of the United States and the
48 Secretary of the Department of Interior are urged to establish a moratorium on all future
49 leasing to expand oil and gas exploration, production, and drilling in all coasts; and

50
51 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President of the United States and the
52 Secretary of the Department of Interior are respectfully urged to maintain the strict
53 regulatory enforcement of standards and oversight of existing and future offshore drilling
54 activities established following the BP Deepwater Horizon accident; and

55
56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted
57 to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, the
58 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
59 and each member of Congress.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**

3 **TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, populations of fish, wildlife, and plant species in the United States are on
5 the decline, in fact, estimates suggest that one in five native species is at risk of
6 extinction; and

7

8 **WHEREAS**, a major threat to fish, wildlife, and plant species in the United States is the
9 loss, degradation, fragmentation, and obstruction of their natural habitats; and

10

11 **WHEREAS**, wildlife are losing the ability to move across landscapes reducing their
12 ability to respond to changes in habitat, food availability, and climate; and

13

14 **WHEREAS**, wildlife-vehicle collisions cost over \$8 billion each year and pose a risk to
15 human and wildlife health; and

16

17 **WHEREAS**, wildlife corridors facilitate the movement of wildlife across the landscape;
18 and

19

20 **WHEREAS**, states are recognizing that wildlife corridors and wildlife crossings are
21 important for protecting native species as well as reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions and
22 are taking actions; and

23

24 **WHEREAS**, the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act will help create a system of
25 federally designated wildlife corridors across the United States on federal lands; and

26

27 **WHEREAS**, the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act will also provide funding and
28 incentives for the protection of wildlife corridors by state and tribal agencies and private
29 landowners on non-federal lands; and

30

31 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
32 Legislators urges the President of the United States and each Member of Congress to
33 establish a national system to implement and promote wildlife corridors and crossings
34 similar to that of the federal Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019, and

35

36 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted
37 to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the
38 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: ANIMAL AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION**

3 **TYPE: AMENDMENT TO EXISTING DIRECTIVE**

4 The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) believes a strong animal
5 production agriculture capacity is imperative in maintaining domestic and international
6 consumer confidence in the safety of the United States meat supply.

7

8 **Animal Identification**

9 NCSL believes a national animal identification program, if properly implemented in
10 cooperation with the states and territories, could be beneficial in maintaining consumer
11 confidence in meat from the United States, an invaluable tool in reducing and tracking
12 future outbreaks of infectious disease, and serving as an important firewall against any
13 attempted terrorist attack on the food production system in the United States.

14

15 Any future effort by USDA to develop a national animal identification program must be
16 designed and implemented in full consultation with state legislatures to ensure proper
17 attention to public interest and financial considerations. Any program must be designed
18 and implemented in cooperation with the departments of agriculture of the states and
19 territories. USDA must work to ensure that any animal identification system is
20 compatible with the current inspection and enforcement systems of the state
21 governments. Any applicable federal program should not be applied to animals involved
22 in intrastate commerce without state consultation.

23

24 **Equine Industry and USDA Inspection of Horse Meat**

25 ~~The processing of horses has become a controversial and emotional issue, resulting in~~
26 ~~the closure of the last horse processing facility in the United States. Without affordable~~
27 ~~and economic alternatives, unwanted horses are abandoned. The nation's inadequate~~
28 ~~and overburdened horse rescue and adoption facilities cannot begin to handle the~~
29 ~~influx. These additional unwanted horses will compete for adoption with wild horses that~~

30 are currently fed and sheltered at a public expense. In the Western United States (US),
31 the additional pressure on public lands from horses turned out to run wild is only
32 intensifying the over population, over grazing, and ultimate destruction of the
33 ecosystem.

34
35 **NCSL urges members of Congress to:**

- 36 ● Recognize the need for humane horse processing facilities in the United States.
- 37 ● Not to interfere with State efforts to establish facilities in the United States. State
38 livestock programs that were once able to recoup the costs of caring and feeding
39 for abandoned animals by marketing them, are now forced to greatly increase
40 their budgets at the expense of taxpayers.
- 41 ● Recognize the positive economic impact of willing market for the US horse
42 industry. These, and ethnic markets inside the US would appreciate an additional
43 source of high quality protein untainted by disease concerns of other species of
44 livestock.
- 45 ● Oppose legislation that would restrict the market, transport, processing, or export
46 of horses. Horse processing in the United States is particularly tightly regulated,
47 and the horse is the only animal whose transportation to processing is regulated.
48 Horse processing facilities in the United States are required to have United
49 States Department of Agriculture (USDA) veterinarians supervise the euthanasia,
50 and the euthanasia method is humane, according the American Veterinary
51 Medical Association and the United States Department of Agriculture.
- 52 ● Oppose limitations under federal appropriations law prohibiting the use of federal
53 dollars to be spent on the salaries of inspectors for ante and post mortem
54 inspections.

55 With respect to the Wild Horse and Burro program created by The Wild Free-Roaming
56 Horses and Burros Act of 1971, NCSL recognizes and appreciates that several
57 stakeholder groups who each have avid, although diverging, interests in the program,
58 have come together on a non-lethal compromise proposal based on the following four
59 aspects: strategic gatherings in the most densely populated herd management areas;
60 relocating animals currently in holding facilities and those being removed from the range

61 to larger, more cost-effective pasture facilities; significantly scaled-up implementation of
62 proven, safe and humane population growth suppression strategies to help reduce and
63 manage population growth; and increased adoptions. NCSL believes these concepts,
64 once more fully developed by program specialists at the Bureau of Land Management
65 (BLM), have merit. NCSL therefore supports a funding increase for the BLM to work
66 with interested stakeholders to further develop a science-based approach that utilizes
67 non-lethal methods to properly manage wild horses and burros. NCSL recommends
68 Congress fully fund and implement the plan on all herd management areas.

69
70 NCSL further recommends that all removals follow the guidelines outlined in the BLM's
71 Comprehensive Animal Welfare Policy (CAWP); all private parties providing care for
72 wild horses and burros shall provide proof of their ability to offer humane conditions and
73 protection against abuse, neglect, or slaughter; private parties shall ensure that wild
74 horses and burros will not be returned to the range; and the BLM present to the
75 appropriate Congressional Committees with a detailed briefing prior to obligation and
76 expenditure of any program increase, and quarterly once the program is implemented.

77

78 **Interstate Sale of State-Inspected Meat and Poultry**

79 NCSL encourages USDA to continue the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program in
80 qualifying states as the program levels the economic playing field for small businesses,
81 spurs more competition in the marketplace, creates a more uniform inspection system,
82 and enhances consumer confidence in the food supply – all of which benefit farmers,
83 ranchers, processors, small business and consumers.