Dear Representative Beyer,

On behalf of the American Wild Horse Campaign (AWHC), we are writing to express our endorsement of your bill, the Ejiao Act, H.R. 5203. The AWHC is the nation’s largest organization for the protection of wild horses and burros. AWHC is dedicated to preserving the American wild horse in viable, free-roaming herds for generations to come, as part of our national heritage.

Our organization supports passage of the Ejiao Act, which would ban the knowing sale or transportation of ejiao made using donkey skin, or products containing ejiao made using donkey skin, in interstate or foreign commerce. Ejiao is a gelatin derived from donkey hides that is used for alternative medicine and beauty treatments, though other alternatives exist. Alarmingly, the ejiao trade has caused significant animal welfare concerns as millions of donkeys are being cruelly slaughtered and suffering heinous abuse to meet a demand for the product. The United States is the third-largest importer of ejiao, with $12 million in imports each year—this bill is critical to address the United States’ role in this practice.

The ejiao trade is decimating the species’ population worldwide. The demand for donkey skins in China has risen to approximately 8–10 million skins per year, but the country’s annual supply is less than 1.8 million, leading to the slaughter of donkeys in other countries, particularly in Kenya, Ethiopia, Botswana, and Brazil. At the current rate, the present global donkey population of 44 million could be halved over the next five years.

America’s wild burros could also be at risk of entering this brutal trade. There has been an uptick in the number of wild burros dumped in kill pens and slaughter auctions across the country, which is consistent with the Bureau of Land Management’s Adoption Incentive Program (AIP) and the continued demand for ejiao. The BLM’s increasingly aggressive roundup strategies are putting more wild horses and burros in holding every year. And the agency’s AIP is funneling unseen numbers of these federally protected animals into the slaughter pipeline.

We thank you for your leadership on the Ejiao Act to end the United States’ role in this cruel enterprise. Please consider us a resource and do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Holly Gann Bice

Holly Gann Bice
Director of Government Relations
American Wild Horse Campaign