

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

October 6, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
The Capitol, S-128  
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
The Capitol, H-307  
Washington, District of Columbia 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
The Capitol, S-146A  
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Norman Dicks  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
The Capitol, H-307  
Washington, District of Columbia 20515

Dear Chairman Inouye, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cochran, and Ranking Member Dicks:

I am writing to express my strong support for ending the annual restrictions on USDA's use of appropriated funds to inspect horses in transit to, and at, domestic processing facilities. This ban has essentially ended domestic horse slaughter operations in the United States and has shifted that production, as well as good paying American jobs, to other countries. I applaud the Senate Appropriations Committee for not including the ban in its version of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for 2012. It is my hope that the House and Senate can work together to end this unwise policy.

In June 2011, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report assessing the unintended consequences from the cessation of domestic horse slaughter operations. The report reveals that the funding ban has had a negative effect on the economy in two ways. First, U.S. horse prices have decreased. GAO estimates that horse prices declined anywhere from 8 to 21 percent as a direct result in the cessation of domestic horse slaughter. This is revenue that American farmers and ranchers would have otherwise earned had it not been for this misplaced policy. Secondly, the U.S. has lost good paying American jobs as a result of this ban. GAO found that 110 commercial shippers operated from 2005-2006 (two years before the ban). However, by 2008 only 50 commercial shippers were in operation. The GAO report discovered that U.S. horse exports to Canada and Mexico have increased 148 and 660 percent, respectively, between 2006 and 2010. At a time when Congress should seize every opportunity to responsibly enable economic development and create American jobs, the ban on funding for inspections has been a drag on the economy.

The GAO report also highlighted a decline in horse welfare since that ban went into effect. Overall, the report reveals that the welfare of horses has declined as they are being transported greater distances to be slaughtered in places where they are not protected by U.S. humane slaughter laws. In addition, a rise in cases of abuse, abandonment, and neglect have strained state, local, and tribal horse welfare resources.

I have been speaking out about the recent cases of horse abandonment and neglect as owners face tough economic times. This ban is a part of the problem. By ending this obstructive ban, we can we bring jobs back to America while at the same time help prevent the inhumane treatment of injured and sick horses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Max Baucus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Max Baucus  
U.S. Senator