

## Proposed Equine Welfare Trust Fund

### ABOUT NEW MEXICO EQUINE SHELTERS:

- Currently, 12 non-profit equine shelters are registered in New Mexico to receive equines seized by law enforcement or government entities as a result of abuse or neglect.
- These 12 non-profit shelters also take in equines that are surrendered, abandoned and stray horses, and free-roaming horses.
- Non-profit equine shelters do not benefit from government support in the same way tax-supported municipal dog-and-cat shelters do. Instead, they rely on grant funding and charitable donations, with minimal help from the State (Equine Shelter Rescue Fund).
- New Mexico's equine shelters frequently operate at capacity and are increasingly unable to accommodate the sheer number of horses in New Mexico needing temporary safe placement, care and/or permanent sanctuary.



*Sky's the Limit* weighed only 700 pounds when he arrived at **Walkin N Circles Ranch** in Stanley. Severely emaciated and needing 24-hour medical care, his body was literally shutting down. Thanks to support from the Horse Shelter Rescue Fund, they were able to provide Sky with the care he needed. He slowly regained weight. His strength and personality returned.

### THE PROBLEM:

- Due to lack of resources and capacity, some horses that could do well in equine shelters are instead sent to auction. These horses face significant risk of being bought by kill buyers and ending up in the slaughter pipeline.
- Some horses need extensive veterinary and farrier care, and expert support and training, for more than two years before being adoptable—AND some horses require lifetime care in sanctuary.
- Expert care for abandoned, neglected, or cruelly treated horses is critical, not only for suffering horses, but also for the health, safety, and well-being of our communities.
- **But state-registered, non-profit equine shelters currently do not receive adequate funding to support the services they provide New Mexico communities.**

**THE SOLUTION:** The solution is the establishment of an Equine Welfare Trust Fund seeded with an initial corpus of \$20 million to generate sustainable funding.

**MORE ABOUT THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION:**

Using a small amount of the state’s current revenue surplus to establish the Equine Welfare Trust Fund is a responsible way to grow that money for current and future funding needs.

- As currently conceived, the *Equine Welfare Trust Fund Act* would create a non-reverting investment fund, managed by the State Investment Council (SIC) or the State Treasurer, called the **Equine Welfare Trust Fund**.
- The Equine Welfare Trust Fund investment earnings would flow to an existing grant (expendable) fund called the **Equine Shelter Rescue Fund**, administered by the New Mexico Livestock Board.
- The expendable Equine Shelter Rescue Fund was established in 2013 and has historically relied on occasional one-time legislative appropriations and minimal annual tax refund donations.
- Establishment of the Equine Welfare Trust Fund would create a more predictable funding source for the already existing expenditure fund, the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund (ESRF). This in turn would allow for greater long-term planning and capacity building by New Mexico’s licensed equine shelters.
- Expanding shelter capacity to increase their ability to take in more free roaming horses will help reduce their impact on the landscape. This in turn is critical to protecting the long-term sustainability of New Mexico’s range lands.
- Based on past performance of SIC-managed funds (more than \$1.5 billion for 23 New Mexico state agencies, municipalities, and other governmental entities, it is estimated the fund may grow at around 5% a year.
- Starting with a \$20 million initial investment, and taking a 4% annual distribution, the Equine Welfare Trust Fund could generate approximately \$800K a year (exact numbers would be best further advised by the Legislative Council Services in working with their economists and experts). **This amount will significantly increase the resources available to New Mexico’s registered non-profit equine shelters, which would in turn increase their ability to accommodate horses in need through improvements in care, training, infrastructure, and expanded capacity.**



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