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## **Former Governor Bill Richardson and Robert Redford Join Fight to Stop Horse Slaughterhouses**

*Announce Formation of Foundation Focused on Protecting Animals and Wildlife*

**SANTA FE, NM-** Former Governor Bill Richardson and legendary actor, director, and conservationist Robert Redford today announced they are joining the fight to stop horse slaughterhouses from reopening in the United States. The action is the first of a new foundation the two have formed to protect animals and wildlife.

The Foundation to Protect New Mexico Wildlife has filed in federal court to join as a plaintiff in a lawsuit filed by animal protection organizations, including the Humane Society of the United States and Front Range Equine Rescue, to block the revival of American horse slaughter. The lawsuit claims the U.S. Department of Agriculture violated federal law by failing to conduct required reviews of the known environmental dangers caused by horse slaughterhouses, including one trying to open in Roswell, New Mexico. The Foundation and other plaintiffs are seeking an emergency injunction.

“As a lifelong horse lover, I am committed to doing whatever it takes to stop the return of horse slaughterhouses in this country and, in particular, my own state,” Governor Richardson said.

“Congress was right to ban the inhumane practice years ago, and it is unfathomable that the federal government is now poised to let it resume. As a country whose rich history is so closely tied to horses, we should instead be focused on exploring new horse rescue and retirement solutions.”

“Horses have played an important part of my life, and I strongly believe they need our protection,” Mr. Redford said. “Horse slaughter has no place in our culture. It is cruel, inhumane, and perpetuates abuse and neglect of these beloved animals. We must oppose it with all of our might. We need to ensure horses have safe and kind treatment during their lives and are afforded the peaceful and dignified end they deserve.”

In addition to its opposition to horse slaughter, The Foundation to Protect New Mexico Wildlife will focus on the preservation and protection of the state’s wild mustang and burro population including seeking out appropriate alternative habitats for the animals. Other efforts will focus on the Mexican gray wolf, bison and the reintroduction of native fish and mammal species. The foundation will also work to support New Mexico’s animal shelters and to prevent animal cruelty.

The Foundation to Protect New Mexico Wildlife is a natural extension of both former Governor Richardson’s and Mr. Redford’s decades of animal advocacy and conservation work.

As governor, Richardson spearheaded legislation and enacted policies aimed at preserving and protecting New Mexico's wildlife and domesticated animals. He fought to ban cockfighting, increased funding for animal shelters, and enacted more humane euthanasia practices in shelters. He made natural habitat and restoration a priority and supported the reintroduction of native species, including the Mexican gray wolf. Most recently, he was instrumental in convincing the National Institutes of Health to halt medical testing on chimpanzees, many of which are housed in Southern New Mexico at the Alamogordo Primate Facility.

Mr. Redford, a part-time New Mexico resident, is a world renowned conservationist and animal advocate. For decades he has fought to protect our country's greatest national resources. He is tireless in his efforts to bring attention to the issues that threaten our natural habitats and the wildlife that call them home. He is a trustee of the Natural Resources Defense Council and has received countless accolades for his efforts, including by the National Wildlife Federation.

By entering the lawsuit against the USDA, Former Governor Richardson and Mr. Redford are also standing with Native American leaders who have asserted that federal approval of horse slaughter constitutes a violation of tribal cultural values and is an insult to their age-old connection with America's horses.