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Wednesday, July 25, 2007

Burros Bill Passes State Senate; Designed to Help Local Animal Control

The state Senate passed a bill that is designed to help local animal control agencies manage wild burros in the Reche Canyon region near Moreno Valley.

The legislation, Assembly Bill 222, is scheduled to return to the full Assembly for final approval.

Animal control officers are currently handcuffed by federal law, said Animal Services Director Robert Miller. He praised legislators for their support and said the bill will allow the department the authority to offer assistance.

The bill, passed by the State Senate last Monday, authorizes a state or local agency to capture and relocate undomesticated burros from private lands upon request of the landowner and, when necessary, for the healthy and safety of the burros if specified conditions exist.

Wild burros have been roaming the Reche Canyon area, tucked between Riverside and San Bernardino counties, since the 1950s. The Reche Canyon burro herd currently includes approximately 50 animals.

Conflicts between the burro population and people increase each year as development in Reche Canyon flourishes, according to language attached to the bill. Specifically, burros stray onto a busy thoroughfare and cause collisions. Since 2003, officials reported 37 vehicular accidents involving burros that resulted in 17 burros being killed. In 2005, a 21-year-old woman died in a car accident because of a burro.

Under federal law, the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act protects all such animals on public lands of the United States from capture, branding, harassment or death. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to manage burros and to remove burros from an area where they are overpopulated.

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“More Love by the Pound”

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