

Horse Deaths on Missouri Freeway Highlight Need for Enforcement of Transport Rules & North American Horse Slaughter Ban

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WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, October 21, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Animal Wellness Action (AWA), and the Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF) called on the U.S. Senate to take up the [Horse Transportation Safety Act](#), H.R. 1400, and for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to step up its existing regulatory enforcement program after yesterday's news that 14



horses met a violent and tragic end on a Missouri freeway. The House passed H.R. 1400, championed by U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., in July. AWA and AWF also called on Congress in the new year to pass comprehensive anti-horse slaughter legislation that forbids live exports of horses for slaughter for human consumption.

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Though the destination of the transported horses has not been publicly revealed, it's a safe bet that the horses – 29 in all were being kept together in a large livestock trailer – were bound for slaughter in Canada or Mexico, where their meat would be sold for human consumption, primarily in Europe.

“The United States is still allowing the live trafficking of healthy American horses to slaughter plants in Canada and Mexico, and most Americans have no idea about the unending misery all of this causes,” said Scott Beckstead,

director of campaigns at Animal Wellness Action. “As the Missouri accident reveals, American horses will continue to be at risk for a horrible end, either on the road or in a foreign abattoir,

until Congress acts on overwhelming public will to shut down this predatory industry.”

For years the USDA has kept rules on the books designed to provide horses destined for slaughter with a modest level of protection. Because of their fractious dispositions, long legs and necks, and pronounced fight-or-flight responses, horses cannot be safely transported in the same way as farm animals like cattle and pigs. The agency’s rules – promulgated as the Commercial Transportation of Equines for Slaughter Act - forbid transporting horses in double-decker trailers designed for cattle, require that horses be ambulatory, not heavily pregnant, and be separated by size and sex. The rules also require periodic stops for rest, food, and water.

While we may never know all the details that led to the crash in Missouri, we have to ask whether the USDA inspected this shipment of horses and whether a rigorous inspection and enforcement of CTESA rules might have prevented it.

U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio (D-OR), chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, said the crash underscores the need for greater USDA oversight. “This terrible crash reveals how unsafe it is to transport large numbers of slaughter-bound horses on roads and freeways in open livestock trailers,” he said. “Thankfully no other motorists were involved, but this accident could have resulted in an even greater loss of human and animal life. We need better oversight and a national ban on ground shipments of horses for slaughter to Canada and Mexico.”

More broadly, the tragedy highlights the need to finally enact a federal ban on equine slaughter for human consumption. Kill buyers and those involved in the transport of horses to slaughter are notorious scofflaws with little to no regard for animal welfare; they are known to lie, steal, and skirt the rules to fill their orders from foreign meat companies. They are known for outbidding rescues and concerned individuals wishing to rescue auction horses at risk and extorting those other bidders after the sale with threats of sending the animals to slaughter if they don’t pay an even higher price, thus ensuring a larger profit for both themselves and the auction owners.

[Click here to find the local news story on the Missouri crash.](#)

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that’s why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don’t. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a

mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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