

SB 371: Undomesticated Burros: Removal and Medical Care

Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh

IN BRIEF

Senate Bill 371 amends Section 53074.5 of the Government Code to allow a nonprofit organization to contract with a county to provide services to undomesticated burros.

ISSUE

An undomesticated burro is defined as a wild burro or a burro which has not been tamed or domesticated for a period of three years after its capture and is not protected by the federal government under the federal Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (Chapter 30 (commencing with Section 1331) of Title 16 of the United States Code).

The largest number of undomesticated burros in California are found in the Reche Canyon region of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. They are not native to the area, having been released by ranchers back in the 1950s. Having roamed the area for roughly 60 years, the wild burro population is estimated to be well over a thousand.

The increase in the burro population along with rapid growth in the Inland Empire has created a hazardous situation for both residents and burros. Major traffic collisions on streets, [highways](#), and railroads are reported regularly and have been the cause of several [deaths](#) over the years.

Although Riverside County Animal Service staff are authorized to move undomesticated burros under certain circumstances, they often lack the staff and resources to treat, rehabilitate, and safely relocate injured burros. Additionally, there is a shortage of veterinarian professionals, which creates additional challenges.

EXISTING LAW

[AB 222](#) (Emmerson, 2007), authorized an officer or employee of a local animal control agency to remove an undomesticated burro that strays onto private land or a public roadway. The bill also authorized an officer or employee of a local animal control agency to provide medical care or treatment, including, but

not limited to, euthanasia if medically appropriate, to an undomesticated burro that is seriously ill or injured.

SOLUTION

Several nonprofit organizations in the Inland Empire are dedicated to serving the burro population. These nonprofit rescue organizations have financial means, volunteers, and specialized veterinary resources. What they lack is the statutory authority to contract with Riverside County Animal Services to aid in the rescue and care of the undomesticated burro population.

SB 371 would allow the County to enter into a contractual partnership with a nonprofit to provide services to remove an undomesticated burro that strays onto private land, remove an undomesticated burro that strays onto a public roadway, and provide medical care or treatment to an undomesticated burro that is seriously ill or injured.

Additionally, the bill would authorize the local animal control agency or an authorized nonprofit to relocate an undomesticated burro that is unfit for release to an appropriate facility or private adopter as authorized by the local animal control agency.

SUPPORT

None on file.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Bill text and status can be found at:
<http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>