

RE: Support for H.R. 961, the Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act

January 28, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Health  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden,

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States, the Humane Society Legislative Fund and our millions of members nationwide, we are writing to express our strong support for H.R. 961, the Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act. This bill would prevent the re-introduction of horse slaughter in the U.S. for human consumption, end the current export of American horses for slaughter abroad, and protect the public from consuming potentially toxic horsemeat.

Each year, tens of thousands of American horses are brutally slaughtered so their meat can be sent overseas to Asia and Europe for human consumption. The entire process is inherently inhumane, starting with the horses' transport to foreign slaughter plants over long distances without food, water or rest. On this journey, many horses sustain serious injuries that can lead to death in transit.

These ghastly incidents are not attributed solely to the transport of horses to slaughter plants abroad. When such plants previously operated domestically, the U.S. Department of Agriculture documented horrific injuries and cruelty.

Once they arrive at the slaughter plant, horses' suffering only continues to worsen.

There is no humane way to slaughter a horse. Because of their natural flight instincts, they often panic in the kill box, making them difficult to stun accurately and subjecting them to repeated blows to the head with a captive bolt gun. Sometimes the horses are still conscious while they are suspended by a back leg, bled out, and dismembered.

Horse slaughter is unacceptable not only because of this inherent cruelty, but also due to the risk it creates for human health. Horses are treated as companion animals and they are often raised for use in show, sport, work, and recreation. As a result, these horses are regularly administered

drugs and other substances that are known to be dangerous to humans or expressly prohibited by current federal regulations for use in animals intended for human consumption. There is no system in the U.S. to track the medications given to horses to ensure that their meat is safe for human consumption, which results in meat that is potentially toxic to humans.

In addition to all of these issues, slaughtering horses in the U.S. is fiscally irresponsible. Millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars should not be spent on overseeing new horse slaughter plants or inspecting horses being exported for slaughter, when 80% of American voters oppose the slaughter of horses for human consumption. There is no market for horsemeat in the U.S. and public opinion is clearly against this practice.

This legislation is supported by the nation's leading animal welfare organizations, as well as many veterinarians, equestrians and equine groups across the country. We join them—and the American public—in supporting the SAFE Act to end the slaughter of American horses here and abroad.

We respectfully request your leadership in advancing this important animal protection and consumer safety legislation and helping to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

Keith Dane  
Senior Adviser, Equine Protection  
The Humane Society of the United States



Tracie Letterman  
Vice President  
Humane Society Legislative Fund

