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**Subject:** Placitan against proposed ordinance

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Good morning, Commissioner Bruch. My name is Ron Franscell and I am a citizen of your District 1/ Placitas. I am writing to voice my opposition to a draft ordinance that's circulating, "Ordinance to Ban Feeding of Certain Wildlife." I urge you to vote against it if/when it comes before the Commission.

The draft doesn't make clear what problem the ordinance would solve. What evil are we trying to correct? The proposal is a transparent effort by anti-horse elements in Placitas to control behavior by people who feed or water the wild horses that are so famously associated with Placitas. While there've been a few unfortunate traffic incidents with horses in the past few years, not all are attributable to misbehavior; we've experienced no extraordinary human or horse losses due to bad driving, roadside feeding, communicable illnesses, or illegal hunting. In all, horses and humans have generally lived in better harmony than humans have lived together in Placitas (*just glance at any day's NextDoor posts*).

The proposal is too broad and heavy-handed. First, it threatens jail time and fines to anybody who, without an expensive 30-day permit that must be renewed every month, feeds or waters a wild horse that wanders within 500 feet of their home. It's curious that legally killing a deer in New Mexico only costs \$34, but helping to keep a wild horse *alive* could cost as much as \$120. There's a whiff of profiteering.

We can agree that deliberate feeding of *bears* might pose a public safety issue (although it's a mystery why feeding a mountain lion would be legal under this draft). But feeding Placitas's wild horses poses no similar inherent public danger. I think even the most ardent horse advocate would support restrictions on feeding horses beside our highways and main-traveled roads, but this proposal goes well beyond roadside feeding.

The 500-foot "no-feeding" space is plainly onerous. Do you know it's legal in New Mexico to fire a weapon within 450 feet of somebody's home but under your proposal, one could go to jail for feeding a wild horse within 500 feet of a home (even one's own)?

The proposal also intrudes on my rights as a property owner to manage my land within reasonable community standards and neighborly courtesy. I have several open acres that are frequented by wandering horses. No neighbors or drivers are impacted whatsoever if I provide a water trough and hay for them. Yet, I might be slapped in jail for three months and fined \$300 if I don't pay Sandoval County for the privilege of feeding them. Frankly, feeding them is a bad thing or it isn't. This proposal suggests Sandoval County is willing to overlook any behavior as long the County can profit by taxing it.

And I don't want to bog down in this debate, but why should feeding a hungry, thirsty wild horse be "illegal" but not feeding wild birds, including birds of prey that might kill pets? It's simply evidence of the anti-horse impetus behind the draft. On that point alone, no such ordinance should be approved for a community where at least as many people enjoy and support the presence of the wild horses.

If you proposed a safety-oriented restriction on roadside feeding of wild horses or any other wandering animals, you might find traction. Forbidding deliberate feeding within 200 feet of Highway 165 might have support among horse proponents. And more diligent patrolling for speeders on Hwy. 165 would be far more proactive for both horses and humans. In other words, we have easier, existing options if safety is the issue.

Thank you for considering my opinions on this draft proposal. There are other points to be made, but I think I've expressed enough to make clear that this proposal is a bad idea.

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