

Public Comment for Upcoming Commission Meeting

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Comments:

I strongly support the County Commission's approval and passing of the Sandoval County Sheriff Office's proposed "Wildlife" Feeding ordinance. The ordinance will help mitigate the dangerous road conditions that exist in Placitas. My neighborhood, in Placitas Heights, is burdened by a resident pack of stray horses that lounge and defecate in the roads, destroy our grasses and forbs, and tromp over private property. Two of my neighbors encourage the horses to stay around by feeding and watering them. No one knows what diseases they harbor ... West Nile perhaps.

As if property damage the uncontrolled horses cause isn't bad enough, more disturbing is the threat they pose to residents commuting to and from. I hit a dark horse while driving on Highway 165 late at night last Summer. In that traumatic event, I was not seriously injured but my truck was totaled and the horse unfortunately died. It was not a good night for either of us. In spite of some people's claims that horses, in or near the road, are easy to spot at night, they are not. On-coming headlights and my own dimmed headlights made the horse undetected until too late. To this day, I have not recovered from the emotional stress and financial loss of that evening. I was surprised to find out that insurance companies do not consider collisions with horses the same way they consider collisions with other vehicles. They try to deny coverage.

In closing, there is no meaningful distinction between packs of stray horses and packs of stray dogs. Neither belong. They both degrade community safety and wellbeing and both are detrimental to ACTUAL wildlife. The horses stomp the flora, thus denuding the landscape, and create life threatening road hazards. I do not understand the fascination some people have with the stray horses. Dog lovers don't fawn over packs of feral dogs or demand animal rights protection for them. The County picks up stray dogs and humanely removes them and everyone applauds. Why not the horses?