



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives
Representative Cody Reim (R-3)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rep. Cody Reim: Hobbs Waited Months to Act on Salt River Horses, Then Adopted Only Part of the Solution

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – After months of pressure from Salt River horse advocates and lawmakers, Governor Katie Hobbs announced Tuesday that her administration will pause removals from the Salt River horse herd through 2027 and pursue a genetic study, adopting portions of legislation advanced earlier this year by State Representative Cody Reim while leaving stronger protections behind.

More than 70 meeting requests were submitted to the Governor’s Office as horse advocates pressed the administration to intervene. Representative Reim also called on the Arizona Department of Agriculture earlier this year to use authority it already had to amend the herd management plan and contract.

“The people who fought for these horses earned this victory,” said Representative Reim. **“They made the calls, demanded meetings and kept the pressure on Governor Hobbs until doing nothing carried a political cost. Her administration had the authority to stop these removals months ago. She waited until August to do what we were asking her to do in April and May.”**

[SB 1199](#), advanced by Representative Reim during the legislative session, would have imposed a three-year moratorium on population-control removals while a peer-reviewed genetic study was completed. Horses could still be removed for urgent medical needs and veterinary care.

The bill also required genetic testing to include measures of “effective population size, allelic diversity and inbreeding coefficients.” It required the Arizona Department of Agriculture to award the testing contract through competitive bidding, with preference for providers with demonstrated expertise in equine genetics.

Governor Hobbs’ plan provides a shorter pause, does not state whether those genetic measures will be required, and routes the study through Arizona’s public universities rather than the process prescribed in SB 1199.

“A genetic study is not enough by itself. The standards matter,” Representative Reim said. **“Will the Governor require effective population size, allelic diversity and inbreeding coefficients to be measured? Who sets the methodology? What equine-genetics qualifications will be required? SB 1199 answered those questions. Governor Hobbs has not.”**

Representative Reim also questioned the Governor’s decision to place the study with the university system without the standards and procurement requirements contained in SB 1199.

“Governor Hobbs is giving herself political cover,” Representative Reim said. “If advocates later challenge the methodology or the study is used to justify more removals, she can blame the universities. We wanted the standards, qualifications and accountability established in law before the study began.”

The Governor’s amended management plan pauses removals only through the end of 2027 and allows population targets for 2028 through 2030 to be reconsidered after the study. The plan can also be changed administratively. SB 1199 would have placed stronger protections in state law.

“Governor Hobbs can change a management plan today, and it can be changed again tomorrow,” Representative Reim said. “The Salt River horses would be better protected now if the Governor had acted when we first raised this issue instead of waiting months and then adopting only part of our approach.”

Representative Reim announced that he will convene a stakeholder meeting with Salt River horse advocates and constituents to hear directly from them about the Governor’s actions and whether further protections are needed.

“Governor Hobbs does not get to decide by press release that this issue is settled,” Representative Reim said. “I want to hear from the people who fought for these horses. If they believe her plan falls short, we will identify what is missing and be ready to act.”

Cody Reim is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 3. Follow him on X at @codyreim247.

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