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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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House Leadership Renews Push to Reinstate Horse Slaughter in US

Chicago (EWA)– EWA has learned that Mr. Douglas A. Glenn, Director, Office of Financial Management, Department of the Interior, has notified his department in [a letter dated 22 February](#), that the GAO (Government Accountability Office) has been tasked to study any changes in the state of equine welfare in the US from 2010 to the present.

The request to the GAO was made by the Chair of the House Agriculture Committee and the Chair of House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration.

Attached to the letter was a statement of the scope of the work to be performed, including addressing four questions:

1. What is known about changes and trends in the U.S. horse market since 2010?
2. What impact, if any, has the prohibition on USDA funding for horse slaughter inspection had on horse welfare and on states, local governments and Indian tribes?
3. What is known about the number of abandoned and unwanted horses in the U.S. and associated environmental impacts?
4. What is the current capacity of animal welfare organizations and shelters to accept and care for unwanted and abandoned horses?

The study request clearly marks the first step in a renewed attempt to lift a ban on the funding for the ante-mortem inspection of slaughter horses. The funding provision is in the annual budget, and thus must be reintroduced whenever a new budget is adopted. Without inspections, it has been illegal to slaughter horses for human consumption off and on since 2007.

The request is essentially identical to a GAO study made at the request of Roy Blunt (R-MO), Herb Kohl (R-WI), and Jack Kingston (R-GA) in 2009. The resulting report (GAO 11-228), took almost two

years to complete and was not released until the eve of a critical budget vote in 2011. Though devoid of welfare data, the report claimed that equine abuse and neglect had soared, falsely implying a 60% increase in Colorado after the closing of the domestic slaughter plants.

GAO 11-228 then became the key proof used by proponents of reinstating the inspections funding. It was constantly cited as showing that the defunding had been a mistake, and it resulted in the Congress reinstating inspections funding in the 2012 budget. The funding remained in place until 2014, by which time EWA had exposed the fact that the original [GAO report had fraudulently used the Colorado data](#), and that there had been no increase in abuse and neglect. Five slaughter houses applied for licenses to slaughter horses, but none opened before the funding was again withdrawn in 2014.

Horse slaughter faces bipartisan opposition in Congress, making a report such as GAO 11-228 essential to justify bringing it back to US soil. In the period since domestic slaughter ended, horses have been [shipped to Canada and Mexico for slaughter](#). However the US does not track the drugs given to horses, and this has resulted in the EU (European Union) banning Mexican horse meat and placing strict quarantine on slaughter horses in Canada.

John Holland, President of EWA, explains “The study is preordained to meaninglessness, since there was virtually no significant change in the number of horses being exported for slaughter over the proposed study period (112,850 in 2010 and 114,091 in 2016). But this ignores the reality of the cauldron of deceit that our government has become. Those requesting the study merely need a document to wave over their heads while they passionately berate their colleagues for causing a nonexistent tragedy. And no doubt, the once trustworthy GAO will produce a document concluding that the exile of the horse slaughter industry resulted in a disaster, tantamount to the Bowling Green massacre.”

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSxUPNgzgn4&feature=youtu.be>

The Equine Welfare Alliance (EWA) is a dues-free, 501c3 umbrella organization with 330 member organizations, the Southern Cherokee Government and over 1,200 individual members worldwide in 23 countries. The organization focuses its efforts on the welfare of all equines and the preservation of wild equids. www.equinewelfarealliance.org