

Enclosure: Responses to Questions 1 Through 4

Question 1: How many herd management areas (HMA) are currently stocked at rates greater than appropriate management level (AML)?

- a) **How many horses or burros would need to be removed to meet range-wide AML?**
- b) **How many horses or burros would need to be removed to meet range-wide Low AML?**

Response: The requested information, by State, is shown in Table 1 below in response to questions 1.a and 1.b:

Table 1: HMAs, High and Low AMLs, Population Projections, and Removal Numbers to Achieve AML, by State.

State	HMAs	Low AML	High AML	Estimated WH&B Population (March 2016)	HMAs Over AML	Removals to Achieve High AML	Removals to Achieve Low AML
AZ	7	1,340	1,676	5,635	6	3,959	4,295
CA	21	1,446	2,200	8,316	18	6,116	6,870
CO	4	423	812	1530	2	718	1,107
ID	6	391	617	468	2	0 ¹	77
MT	1	90	120	160	1	40	70
NV	83	7,597	12,811	34,531	72	21,720	26,934
NM	2	58	83	171	2	88	113
OR	18	1,373	2,715	3,841	12	1,126	2,468
UT	19	1,084	1,956	5,840	18	3,884	4,756
WY	16	2,490	3,725	6,535	15	2,810	4,045
TOTAL	177	16,292	26,715	67,027	161	40,461	50,735

Note 1: The current Idaho population is 149 below high AML.

Question 2: The BLM has reported that adoption rates in recent years have decreased from historic highs more than a decade ago. Over the past five years:

- a) **How many horses and burros have been adopted through the program?**
 - i) **How many of these have been over five years of age?**
- b) **How many horses and burros have been placed in short- and long-term holding facilities?**
 - i) **How many have been placed in refuges or paid-for long-term holding facilities controlled by entities other than the agency?**

Response: The requested information is shown below in response to questions 2.a and 2.b:

Table 2: Wild Horse and Burro Adoptions by Year and Number Adopted over the Age of Five Years.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Total Adopted	2,844	2,583	2,311	2,135	2,631	12,504
Adopted > Age 5	584	598	466	456	899	1,365

Table 3: Wild Horse and Burro Removals from 2011 to 2015 and Animal Disposition.

Removed	Adopted (1 to 5 years old)	Adopted (>5 years old)	Sold	Off-Range Corrals (short-term holding)	Off-Range Pastures (long-term holding)	Eco-sanctuaries	Deaths
26,738	4,472	1,365	941	11,211	5,531	246	2,972

Currently, 3,300 animals are located in BLM owned corrals and 43,000 in pastures and corrals owned by entities other than the BLM.

Over the past 40 years, the BLM has adopted out more than 230,000 wild horses and burros that were removed from the range to protect animal and land health. Today, adoption rates are at record low levels. In the early 2000s, the BLM was able to adopt out nearly 8,000 horses each year. Over the last few years, however, annual adoption totals have been closer to 2,500 animals per year.

Question 3: Is the agency currently utilizing technological platforms to facilitate adoptions?

Response: The BLM utilizes various social media platforms – including Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Flickr – in its efforts to place wild horses and burros into private care. The BLM actively manages a Facebook page with near-daily posts to promote adoptions of wild horses and burros by advertising off-site adoption events, events at our off-range corrals and pastures, and opportunities to adopt over the Internet. The BLM hosts online competitive adoption opportunities via the Adopt-A-Horse website approximately six to nine times each year, during which 100 or more animals are available for potential adopters via online auction. The BLM is currently undertaking a review of the Adopt-a-Horse website and Internet adoption process in order to identify opportunities for improvement.

The BLM also maintains a tentative adoption schedule on its website to provide information to potential adopters.

Question 4: Within the context of management and conservation of sage grouse habitat, wildfire prevention, and general land health:

- a) What would the agency require to achieve Appropriate Management Levels (AML) in 3, 5, and 10-year time frames?
- b) What would the agency require to achieve the Low level of AML in currently overstocked HMAs within the existing tools and authorities in 3, 5, and 10-year time frames?
- c) At the agency level, what changes can be made to address pervasive overstocking, population explosion, and environmental degradation?

d) What Congressional action could be taken to provide additional flexibility to facilitate effective management?

Response to 4.a and 4.b: Low and high AML (16,292 and 26,715 animals, respectively, as shown in Table 1 above) could be reached within the timeframes of 3, 5, and 10 years by removing large numbers of animals from the public lands. Substantial additional resources to support gather contracts, increased off-range facilities (i.e., corrals and pastures) to maintain horses off-range, and additional staffing would be needed to achieve AML within these timeframes. In the following scenarios, implementation actions to increase removals to achieve AML are initiated in Fiscal Year 2017.

Table 4 below is a summary comparison of the costs for the 3-, 5-, and 10-year time frames. An additional 86,000 - 136,000 animals would be added to BLM off-range facilities as a result of removing 3,500 animals in year one (2016) and between 15,200 - 29,700 animals per year in each of the next 2-11 years, unless adoptions increase dramatically. Total costs for removal, adoption and care of unadopted animals maintained in off-range facilities are shown in Table 4. Once the target AML is achieved, annual removals of 2,835 animals for low AML and 4,650 for high AML would be required to maintain the AML level. If effective fertility control methods become available, fertility control treatments could assist in maintaining population levels and reducing removals in subsequent years.

Population graphs based on the 3-, 5-, and 10-year timeframes for achieving Low and High AML (Scenarios 1 through 6) follow Table 4.

Table 4: Wild Horse and Burro AML Attainment Scenarios and Costs.¹

Management Scenario	Year AML Achieved	Range of Annual Costs to Implement During the First 15 Years (in millions)²	Total Cost Over a 40-year Time Period for Actions Taken in First 15 Years³
Scenario 1: Achieve High AML in 3 years Remove 3,500 in year 1 (2016); 26,760 in each of years 2-4; and 4,650 annually thereafter through year 15 to maintain AML. 2,500 animals adopted annually results in 97,430 total unadopted animals maintained in off-range facilities.	Year 4	\$81 - \$193	\$3.1 billion
Scenario 2: Achieve High AML in 5 years Remove 3,500 in year 1 (2016); 19,965 in years 2-6; and 4,650 annually thereafter to maintain AML. 2,500 animals adopted annually results in 107,675 total unadopted animals maintained in off-range facilities.	Year 6	\$62 - \$211	\$3.4 billion

Management Scenario	Year AML Achieved	Range of Annual Costs to Implement During the First 15 Years (in millions) ²	Total Cost Over a 40-year Time Period for Actions Taken in First 15 Years ³
Scenario 3: Achieve High AML in 10 years Remove 3,500 in year 1 (2016); 15,230 in each of years 2-11; and 4,650 annually thereafter through year 15 to maintain AML. 2,500 animals adopted annually results in 136,000 total unadopted animals maintained in off-range facilities.	Year 11	\$49 - \$265	\$4.0 billion
Scenario 4: Achieve Low AML in 3 years Remove 3,500 in year 1 (2016); 29,700 in each of years 2-4; and 2,835 annually thereafter through year 15 to maintain AML. 2,500 animals adopted annually results in 86,285 total unadopted animals maintained in off-range facilities.	Year 4	\$89 - \$188	\$2.9 billion
Scenario 5: Achieve Low AML in 5 years Remove 3,500 in year 1; 21,440 in each of years 2-6; and 2,835 annually thereafter through year 15 to maintain AML. 2,500 animals adopted annually results in 98,715 total unadopted animals maintained in off-range facilities.	Year 6	\$66 - \$204	\$3.2 billion
Scenario 6: Achieve Low AML in 10 years Remove 3,500 in year 1; 15,685 in each of years 2-11; and 2,835 annually thereafter through year 15 to maintain AML. 2,500 animals adopted annually results in 134,190 total unadopted animals maintained in off-range facilities.	Year 11	\$51 - \$267	\$4.0 billion

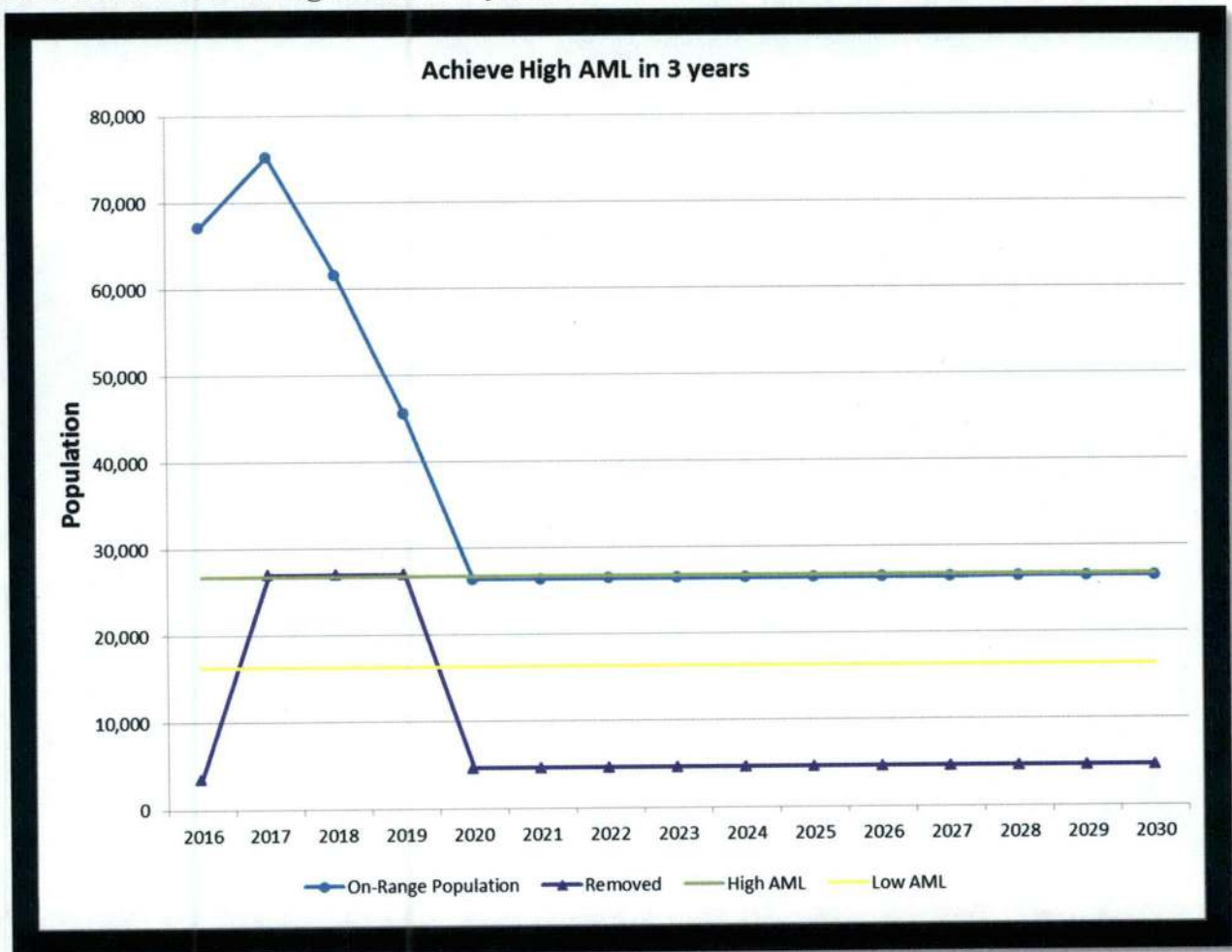
Note 1: These costs assume that all unadopted animals will be maintained in corral facilities. This assumption is made because of the difficulty the BLM has had in obtaining cost-effective off-range holding pastures.

Note 2: The annual cost to implement each management scenario includes the cost of gathers and adoptions in addition to the cost providing off-range care for animals removed from the range but not adopted. Because additional animals would be removed each year, the numbers of unadopted animals in off-range holding facilities increases over time. This, in turn, increases the annual cost of the management scenario over time. Therefore, the table displays the range of expected annual costs over the 15-year period.

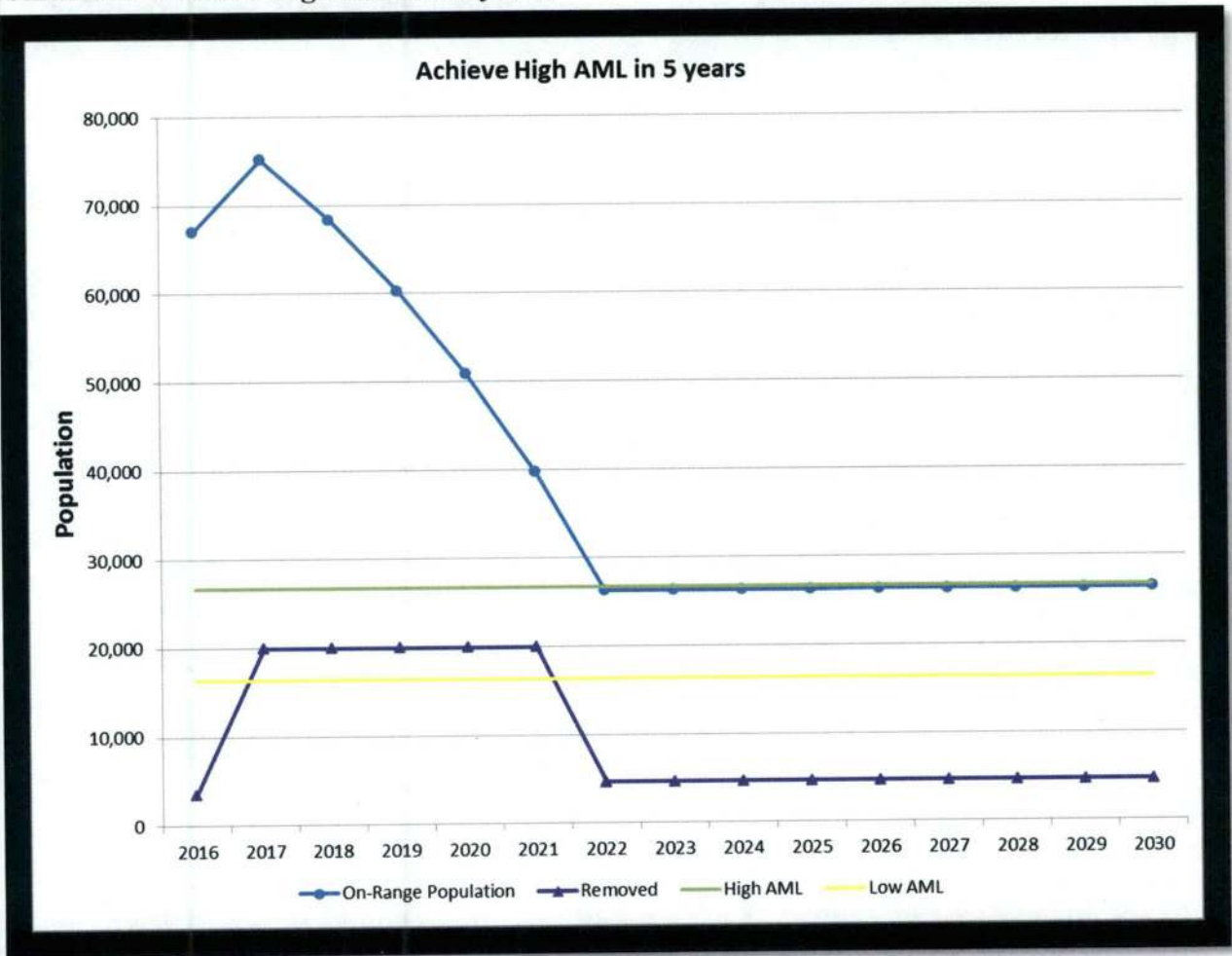
Note 3: The lifetime cost of care for unadopted animals is substantial and will be incurred for another 25 years past the 15-year mark. For this reason, the total actual cost of each management scenario is accrued over a 40-year time period. These estimates are derived from the present value of costs incurred due to actions taken in the first 15 years, assuming a 3 percent annual discount rate. These estimates depend on a number of factors, e.g. the actual cost of off-range care, cost for gathers, and the number animals adopted.

Population graphs in response to Question 4.a (Scenarios 1, 2, & 3).

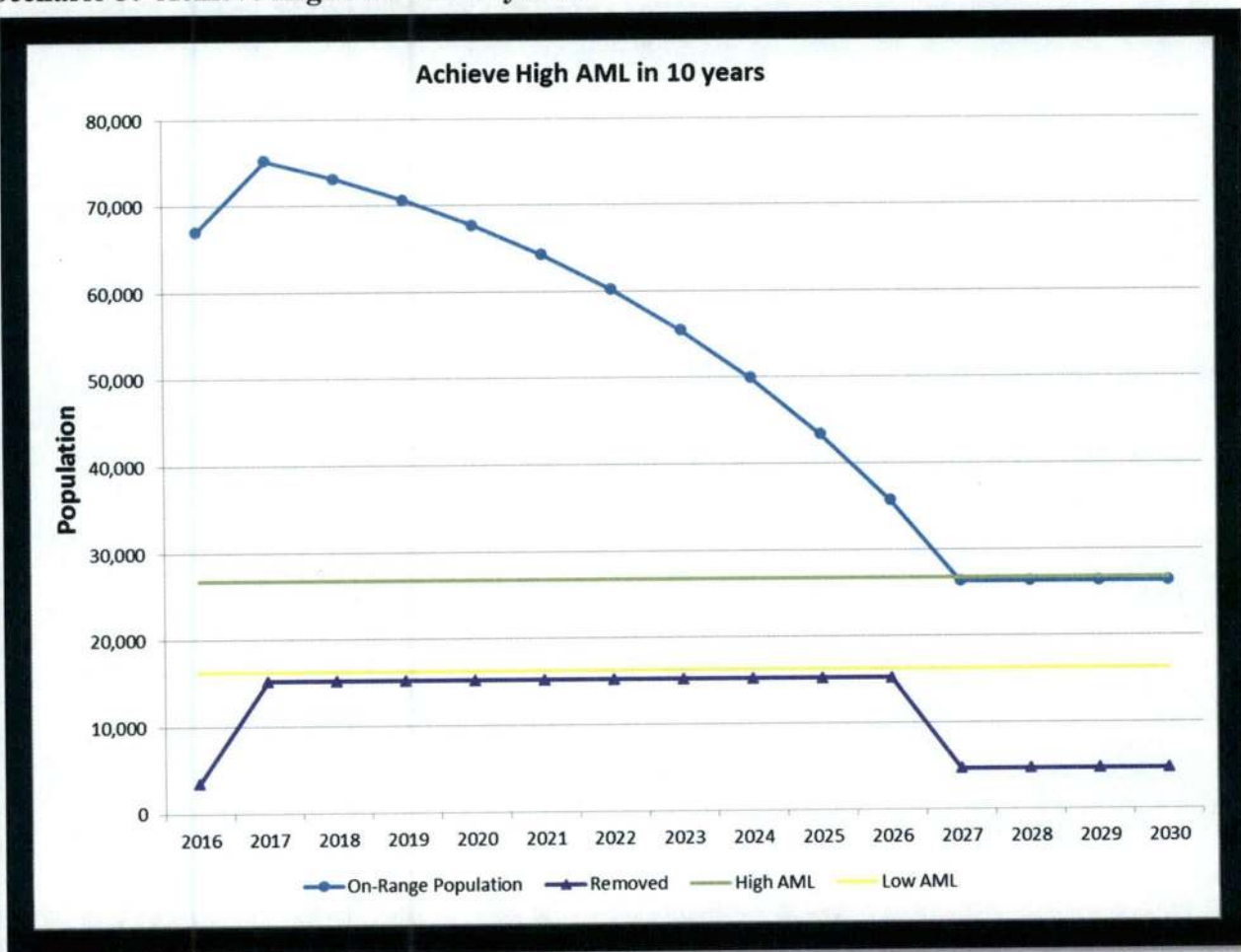
Scenario 1: Achieve High AML in 3 years.



Scenario 2: Achieve High AML in 5 years.

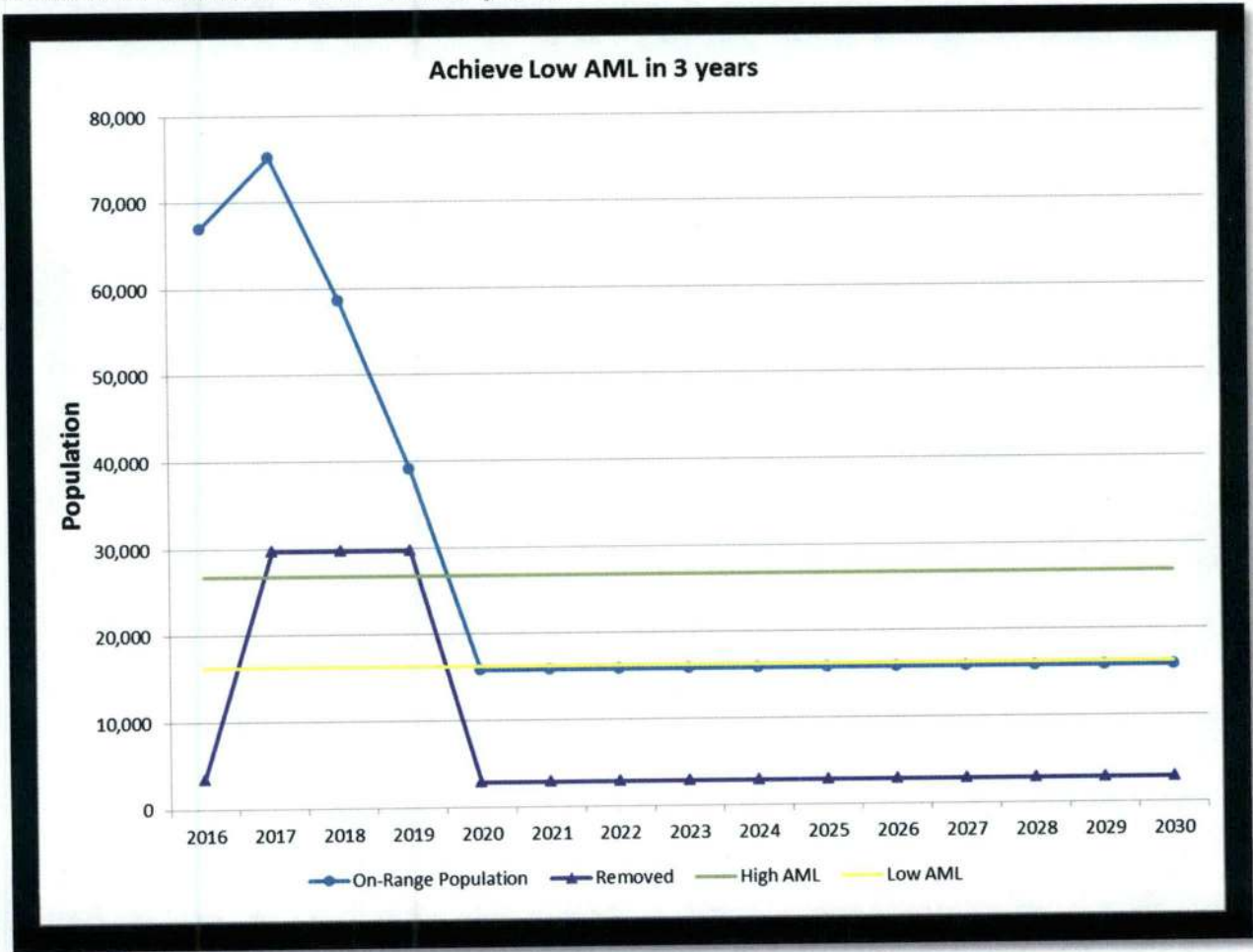


Scenario 3: Achieve High AML in 10 years.

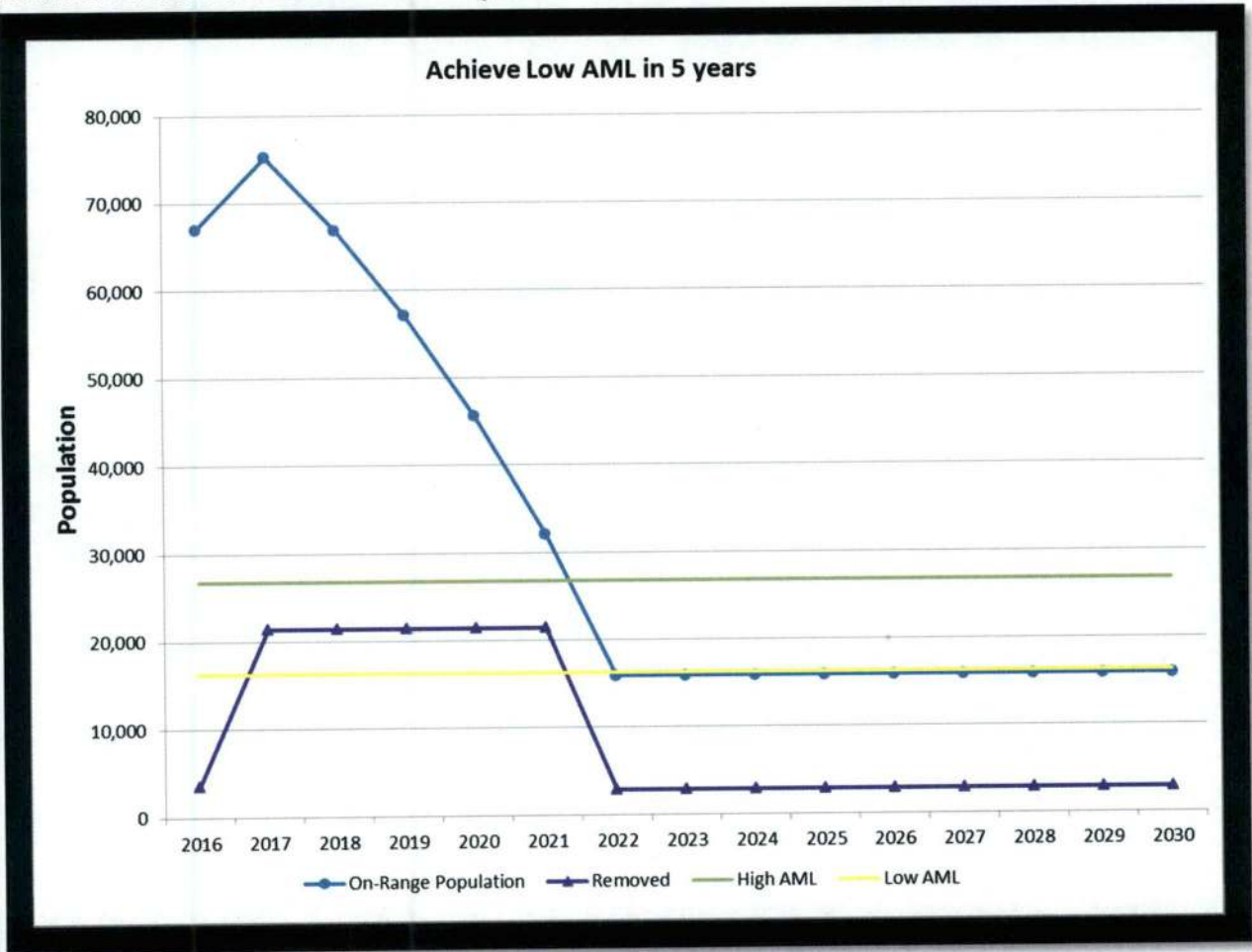


Population graphs in response to Question 4.b (Scenarios 4, 5, & 6).

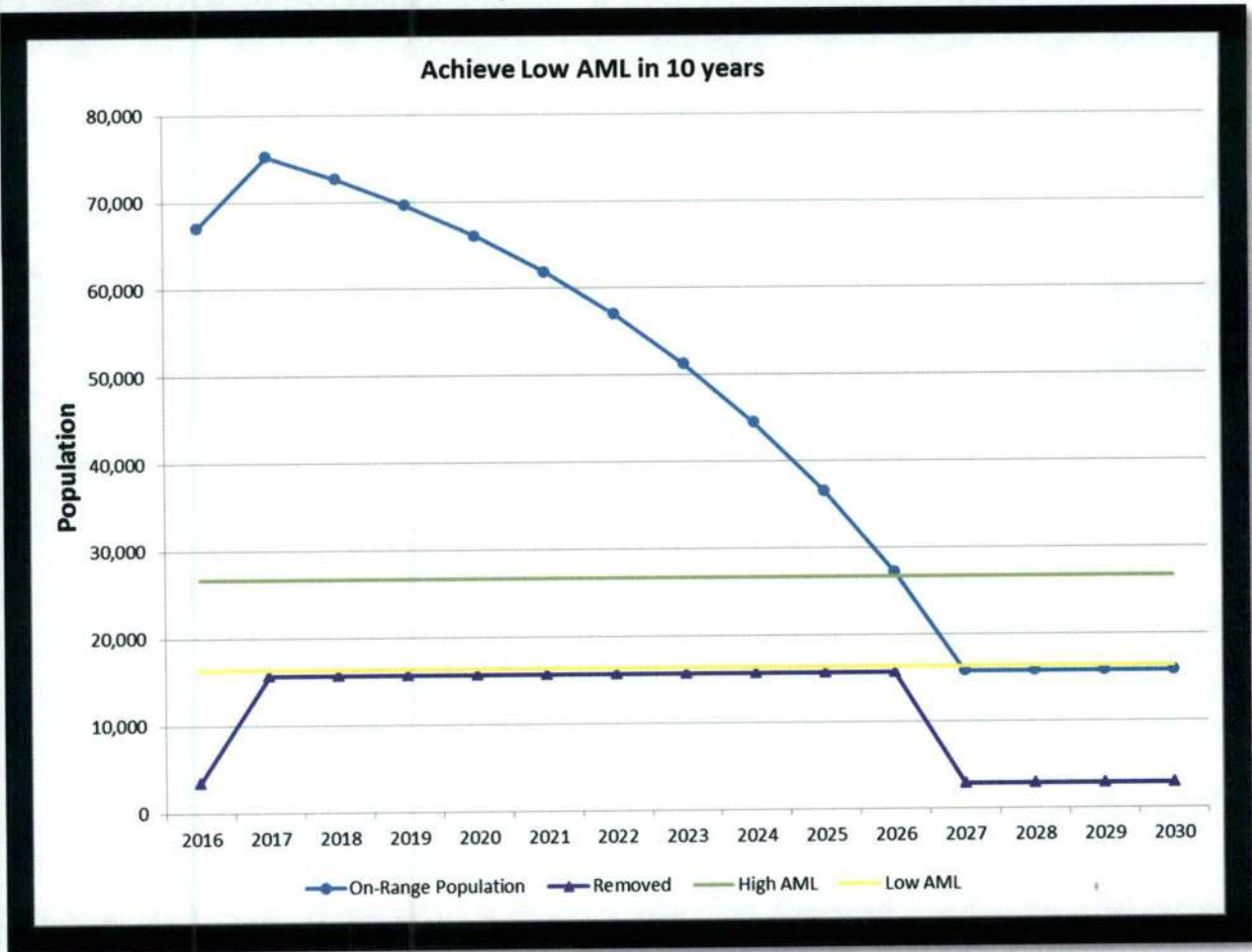
Scenario 4: Achieve Low AML in 3 years.



Scenario 5: Achieve Low AML in 5 years.



Scenario 6: Achieve Low AML in 10 years.



Response to Question 4.c: With a clear understanding of the importance of getting wild horse and burro populations back onto a sustainable path, the BLM has initiated a number of critical reforms. As previously noted, the BLM is sponsoring a significant research program focused on fertility control; transitioning horses from off-range corrals to more cost-effective pastures; working to increase adoptions with new programs and partnerships; and requesting legislative authority to allow for the immediate transfer of horses to other agencies that have a need for work animals. Despite these efforts, three critical obstacles remain. First, herds for wild horses naturally double in size every four years. In the absence of a reliable birth control agent that lasts longer than one year, slowing the growth of horse herds is a major challenge. Second, adoptions of wild horses have dropped dramatically in recent years. While the BLM could once rely on nearly 8,000 horse adoptions in a given year, adoptions have slowed to an annual rate of just 2,500 horses. This means that thousands of additional horses must either stay on the range or be placed on private pastures or in private corrals. Third, the lifetime cost of feeding and caring for a wild horse that has been removed from the range can approach \$50,000 per animal. With nearly 50,000 horses and burros already in off-range corrals and pastures, this means that without new opportunities for placing these animals with responsible owners, the BLM will spend more than a billion dollars to care for and feed these animals over the remainder of their lives. Given this vast financial commitment, the BLM is now severely limited in how many animals it can afford to remove from the range.

Response to Question 4.d: Congressional action that would provide additional management flexibilities include the following:

Potential Tax Incentives

The total lifetime cost for BLM to care for an unadopted animal in a corral facility is nearly \$50,000. Creating a tax incentive for individuals who adopt and keep the adopted animal(s) could drastically increase the program's adoption rate. In one possible scenario, if the Congress created a system whereby adopters who kept and properly cared for their wild horse for ten or more years could recoup \$10,000 to support the cost of caring for and feeding the horse, multiple benefits could be achieved. First, the horse would find a good and caring home. Second, the adopter would know that some of the costs of feeding, caring for, and training the horse would be subsidized, lessening the overall costs of ownership. Under this scenario, we would assume that the subsidy would only be provided to adopters who could verify at certain intervals – possibly through the affidavit of a local veterinarian – that the horse is alive and well-cared for. A third substantial benefit would accrue to American taxpayers who could save tens of thousands of dollars on each horse that is adopted under a new program like this. Because the BLM pays nearly \$50,000 for the lifetime care of many animals, a considerable adoption subsidy could be provided while still providing significant overall savings to the American taxpayer.

Authority to Transfer Wild Horses and Burros to Federal, State and Local Agencies

The President's budget contains a proposal to create a new authority that would allow organizations like the U.S. Border Patrol and the U.S. Military to directly acquire wild horses and burros for legitimate work purposes. No authority currently exists, making it both complicated and difficult for these organizations to acquire wild horses and burros for work purposes.

BLM Foundation

The President's budget contains a proposal for a congressionally-chartered foundation that would support the efforts of the agency. It is our hope that this organization would help bring significant new partnerships and private dollars to support the Wild Horse and Burro Program. The vision behind this proposal is to stand up an organization similar to the National Park Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, or the National Forest Foundation. The BLM is the only major land management agency without a congressionally-chartered non-profit to support its work.

Sponsorship Program

Create a "sponsor-a-mustang" or "virtual adoption" program, whereby private parties can contribute funds for the care of wild horses and burros.

Incentivize Pasture Availability

Provide incentives for off-range pasture contractors to encourage the availability of pastures, which are more cost-effective, yet more difficult to obtain, than corral facilities.

Support Population Control Research

Provide key supports to encourage private and government innovation in the field of fertility control for wild horse and burro populations.

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