

Equine Slaughter Voted Down in South Dakota

Legislators Opt to Kill Senate Bill 170.

01-31-2008

After being bombarded with anti-slaughter messages from people across the country, a South Dakota legislative committee killed Senate Bill 170 on Jan. 29. If passed, the bill would have set the wheels in motion for construction of an equine slaughter facility in that state. Currently, there are no U.S. equine slaughter facilities.

Senate Bill 170, which would have provided a \$1 million state loan to construct an equine slaughter plant in South Dakota, was voted down because legislators there were concerned about horse slaughter legislation currently pending in Congress. That legislation, the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (H.R. 503/S. 311), a federal bill that was reintroduced to the current Congress this year, would make it illegal to slaughter horses for human consumption and would also outlaw the domestic and international transport of horses to slaughter. H.R. 503/S. 311 has yet to be voted on.

Many people considered the South Dakota bill a waste of time because of the pending federal legislation on horse slaughter. Animal welfare organizations are hailing the legislative decision to kill the bill and point to the overwhelming anti-slaughter sentiment in this country. According to an Associated Press report, South Dakota legislators said they received thousands of e-mail messages and phone calls from people who opposed Senate Bill 170. However, Republican Senator Tom Hansen said he wasn't swayed by the messages. "We love to hear from our constituents, but we don't especially take kindly from hearing from people who don't even understand the situation, who live in California, Pennsylvania, New York," Hansen said.