

Testimony of Lauren A. Sill
HB-2208 AN ACT CONCERNING WILDLIFE; RELATING TO THE TRANSFERABILITY OF DEER PERMITS

I respectfully submit my opposition to HB-2208 and request rejection of this Bill.

Wise conservation, management, and utilization of our natural resources should be based upon sound science and data. Social and economic pressures do play a role but these must be secondary if we are to avoid making decisions that can have a very long-lasting, if not permanent, effect on the quality and quantity of our resources, including our deer.

The proposed transferable permit system has several serious flaws. 1) It disregards differences across the state in the age, gender, and size of our deer herds. This system could potentially damage the number and quality of deer in some areas of the state to such a degree that, in a short period of time, non-residents won't want to come and hunt because there are too few quality animals remaining. 2) The transferable permit system also carries an underlying philosophy that wildlife belong to the landowner and therefore the landowner should be able to treat them as a commodity. As a Kansas resident and landowner, I stand firmly behind the historical position in this state that the resources of this state belong to all residents equally. 3) The bill is also discriminatory against Kansas residents in that it is giving preference to non-residents who already have a significant proportion of deer permits in the state. I resent the resources of my state being transferred to non-residents for the economic benefit of a few.

I recognize that there are social concerns (deer-car collisions), landowner concerns (crop damage), and economic concerns that are valid considerations in the management of deer and deer hunting in Kansas. However, there are already mechanisms in place to deal with some of these issues. I trust that our current Agriculture Committee has the wise foresight to recognize that some short-term gains are not worth the price to be paid by all in the long-term.

As a deer hunter of more than 30 years in Kansas I experienced a significant loss of access to land on which to hunt when the original transferable permit system took effect. I have also watched the numbers and quality of available buck deer decline significantly over the past 10 or more years. I understand that non-resident hunters bring economic benefit to our state. However, I believe we must find a balance of preserving deer hunting opportunities for resident hunters, providing appropriate levels of non-resident hunting, and being responsible stewards of our deer resources so that both groups can continue to pursue quality animals for many years to come.

Finally, I am aware that Mr. Lee Queal and Mr. Lloyd Fox both oppose this bill as well. These two men whose combined careers as distinguished wildlife biologists working for what is now known as the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, comprise the first 15 years of and last 21 years of deer hunting in Kansas. Please give heed to the wisdom and scientific knowledge that built and sustained a nationally renowned deer population. Please reject HB 2208.

Thank you for your consideration.

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