

TESTIMONY OF LLOYD B. FOX:
HB-2208, AN ACT CONCERNING WILDLIFE; RELATING TO THE
TRANSFERABILITY OF DEER PERMITS.

I respectfully urge the members of The Kansas House Committee on Agriculture to reject House Bill 2208.

Similar legislation was attempted in Kansas in the past and it created problems and was divisive for Kansas residents concerned with management of deer in Kansas. That system created confusion which lead to inappropriate transfers of deer permits resulting in technical violations. It also lead to unscrupulous activities that increased poaching. Simply stated, nonresidents heard that deer permits in Kansas could be transferred. They became involved in illegal activities where regular deer permits, not the transferable permits, were used.

Clear and simple permit systems are best. One of the standards for clarity is that a deer hunter must obtain a permit issued with their name printed on it. No person other than that person may use that permit.

The Kansas deer permitting system is already complicated and confusing. Within the Kansas Outdoor Automated License System (KOALS) there are 45 different codes types for deer permits. Each of those permit types have slightly different characteristics, such as seasons when they may be used, species of deer and/or antler characteristics that may be taken, etc. That level of complexity is something that developed through time when various groups of people asked for special consideration in the allocation of deer hunting opportunities. There are permits for landowners which are less expensive than similar permits for general residents. There are permit types for landowners who wish to hunt deer only on their own property. There are permit types for people who hunt with different equipment (e.g., firearms, muzzleloader, or archery). There are permit types with reduced fees for young hunters. Please do not increase the level of complexity with an addition of a new transferable deer permit types.

A premise behind this bill is that it will be beneficial because it will allow more non-residents to come to Kansas and it will guarantee that the individual that a landowner wishes to have hunting on their property will be able to obtain a permit. There may be a few cases where the specific person who wished to come to Kansas has been unable to obtain a permit. However, the facts are that few non-residents have been denied a deer permit since 2008 when the law was changed. Most non-residents are able to obtain a permit each year they apply. For example, in 2016 there were 21,816 white-tailed deer permits authorized in the drawing for non-residents. There were 23,092 people who applied for those permits and 21,225 obtained the permit they requested. Of the people who obtained that class of permit, 20,041 of them had zero preference points. That means that they either had a permit the last time they applied or this was the first time they applied for a deer permit in Kansas. No non-resident with one or more preference points has been denied a deer permit in any of the 18 units in the state.

Non-residents are an important part of the Kansas deer hunting. They bring new money into the state and thus add to the positive economic effect. One of the important questions that should be asked is what level of non-resident deer hunters is appropriate for Kansas. Opportunities for Kansas residents may be decreased at high levels of non-resident participation. Kansas currently has the highest level of non-resident deer hunter participation of Midwest states, and probably the whole nation. A nationwide survey of state wildlife agencies in 2013 showed that non-residents comprised 22.5% of the deer hunters in Kansas. That was the highest level they documented. Corresponding levels in other Midwest states were: 10.3% OH, 10.2% IL, 8.2% SD, 6.7% IN, and 5.0% in IA, MO, and WI (personal correspondence, C. J Winand, Bowhunter magazine). Continuation of the high level of interest among the nation's deer hunters to come to Kansas is contingent upon the successful programs of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to manage the herd and its characteristics at optimal levels. I believe that the desires of Kansas resident deer hunters should be considered in any discussion on opportunities for future deer hunting and that the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has the expertise to accomplish that.

Guidance and oversight by elected state representative is an important part of deer management. I believe that oversight may be accomplished without additional complications in the current deer permit system and therefore this bill is unnecessary.

I fully support the testimony on this issue of Leland Queal. I submit my testimony to you as a supporter of professional, scientific deer management for the benefit of the people of the state. I believe that I have expertise in that area as it was my honor to serve as the Big Game Program Coordinator for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism from 1995 until my retirement in 2016. Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully,

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