

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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DOUG BLEX
12TH DISTRICT

Chairman Ken Rahjes

Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Chairman Rahjes and Committee Members:

I thank you for the opportunity to consider my endorsement of House Bill 2541, introduced by myself on behalf of Kansans for Conservation Coalition in the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. I sincerely believe Kansas needs funding support to promote conservation practices on Kansas lands.

Growing up on the farm and having access to a creek to explore the diversity of wildlife and fish instilled a lifelong passion for conservation. This passion opened the door for a career in wildlife conservation after my graduation from Kansas State University. My career in conservation included over 35 years in Nebraska and Kansas. I have volunteered my services to many conservation organizations and served on the Montgomery County Conservation District for 9 years.

Conservation Districts are in all 105 counties of Kansas. The County Conservation Districts serve as an important vehicle for conservation practices, use of specialized rental equipment such as grass drills and education of area producers. They have been historically underfunded and served by underpaid managers. District managers work along Natural Resources Conservation Service staff to promote conservation practices. Fifty percent of the re-directed state funds would go to County Conservation Districts in the form of a grant application process.

My career in wildlife conservation exposed me to conservation work by Kansas Wildlife and Parks and later served as a private contractor for Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams (KAWS) and worked for the Kansas Department Health and Environment (KDHE) and have seen the continued need for viable funding for conservation. This bill will provide 25% re-directed funding for wildlife and 25% funding for state parks.

Utilizing existing funding and redirecting those monies to conservation is a great move. Legislators who believe in being good stewards of our Lord's creation should strongly support utilizing the "sin taxes" to fund conservation practices that provide stewardship for our unique Kansas land.

Utilizing 50% of an amount equal to the total retail and compensating use taxes on sales taxes collected on sporting good sales to be transferred from the State General Fund (SGF). This nearly mirrors a "user

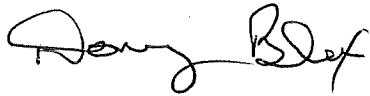
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pay" for those benefiting the most from funding conservation practices. There is a program at the federal level that tracks these purchases and reimburses every state based on the number of license buyers in the state. This funding concept would mirror the federal program in tracking the amount, but the Streamlined Tax Agreement prevents a direct carve-out.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Blex". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Doug Blex

State Representative, House District 12