

**Testimony on HB 2452 relating to Special Big Game Permits
To
The House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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HB 2452 seeks to create special big game permits. The provisions of the bill would be effective on publication in the statute book. **The Department opposes the provisions contained in the bill.**

HB 2452 would allow the Governor, by proclamation, to have the Secretary issue not more than twelve big game special permits per year to an person or entity of the Governor's choosing. The permits would allow the take of an antlered white-tailed or mule deer statewide and in any season with legal equipment.

The proposed legislation has several problems associated with it. First, it allows for an individual to obtain a permit without following normal application procedures based on their association with a Governor. That is directly contrary to the North American Model of Wildlife Management and the basic tenant that everyone should have equal opportunity to participate in wildlife-related recreation. Several states that once had "Governor's" permits have gone away from permits being awarded to individuals and now award permits to nonprofit entities that auction them for charitable purposes related to wildlife management.

Kansas already has an auction model in place with Commission permits. Those permits, up to 7 annually, are awarded to qualified nonprofit conservation organizations by random drawing. The organization awarded must pay the Department for the cost of the permit, raise the highest amount possible for the permit and spend 85 percent of the proceeds on a conservation project approved by the Department. In return, the organization is allowed to keep 15 percent of the proceeds for their operations. The Commission permits are awarded in January of the year they are valid.

Second, an individual, with the exception of someone who possesses a Commission permit, can obtain no more than one antlered buck permit. In addition, nonresidents are not eligible for a firearm (rifle) mule deer permit (Resident hunters must draw for a limited number of rifle mule deer permits). Again, the bill would allow individual exceptions to the rule based solely on an association with the Governor, inviting the perception of political favoritism.

Deer hunting in Kansas is well promoted through outdoor television shows and outdoor publications. The quota of nonresident deer permits, established by statute is sold out each year but only after permits leftover from the drawing are issued first come, first served.

Scientific management and fee funding are basic tenants of the North American Model of Wildlife Management. Deer hunting in Kansas alone generates approximately \$350,000,000 in direct and collateral economic benefit to the State of Kansas and its citizens. This influx of spending to the State is a direct result of the professional and scientific management by Kansas biologists.

The Department appreciates the support of the Committee in opposition to the bill.