

SENATE BILL 314

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 17, 2012

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. I am Jim Snyder, Speaker ProTem for the Kansas Silverhaired Legislature. We oppose Senate Bill 314 for a number of reasons.

I have attached material:

1. A letter from 70 year old Thomas Feikert of Blue Mound, KS which probably is the best explanation as to the feelings of seniors who will be effected by this.
2. Copy of an email which was sent to Silverhaired. The Statute 32-988 provided for a maximum of \$25 for licenses.
3. HOWEVER, IF THEY ARE ONLY CHARGING A LITTLE MORE THAN \$20....RAISING THE PRESENT LICENSES TO \$25 WOULD PROBABLY CREATE AS MUCH REVENUES AS CAUSING CONCERNS AMONG THE 30,000 SENIORS (65 YEARS AND OLDER) WHICH THE WILDLIFE PEOPLE THINK WILL BE EFFECTED.

I realize that Departments and Agencies have been asked to be self-sustaining, but there must be a better way than to penalize seniors for their longevity and dedication to the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Department.

We request Senate Bill 314 be looked upon unfavorably.

Thank you.

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by Robin Garrison Vol 69 No #1

I am a 70 year old retiree who started fishing at 4 yrs old & hunting at age 10. I have purchased licenses, permits, duck & W&P stamps etc all my life. I worked part time as a Kansas citizen looking forward to the day when time would afford me more time in the Kansas outdoors. Now on a fixed income the 2012 Legislative Agenda proposes to remove the 65 year & older exemption because of a decline in Kansas Hunting & Fishing License sales.

Are they penalizing seniors for their longevity & dedication to the KW&P? The decline is not the 65+ over Kansas residents fault. Many seniors will hang it up. The decline will be felt by Merchants selling outdoor equipment. Please try other ways to fund your programs. Do not punish the 65+ older residents who are on a fixed income.

Thank You  
Thomas R. Feikert



Thomas R. Feikert  
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Blue Mound, KS 66010



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# KANSAS

# View

by Robin Jennison



## 2012 Legislative Agenda

As 2011 closes and the past year's fishing, hunting, and camping trips are logged into our memory banks, we here at Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism turn our attention to the 2012 legislative session. The legislative process is an important part of protecting and maintaining our outdoor resources and heritage.

The only constant in our business is that things will change, and we must adapt if we are to continue providing the services our constituents expect. Throughout this process, we will never lose sight of our mission, which is to conserve and enhance our natural resources, while creating opportunities for Kansas citizens and future generations to enjoy those natural resources. With that in mind, we have drafted a significant 2012 legislative agenda.

Two of our initiatives are critical to the future of our programs. Kansas is truly a user-pay system for wildlife management and outdoor recreation – those who enjoy hunting, fishing, and state parks pay for those resources and outdoor opportunities. License sales and the federal excise tax on hunting and fishing equipment from the Pittman-Robertson and Dingle-Johnson acts make it possible for KDWPT to work on behalf of Kansas sportsmen and women. However, license revenues haven't kept up with program costs. With rare exception, hunters and anglers take great pride in introducing someone new, particularly youngsters, to the outdoors, and those efforts, along with their financial support ensure outdoor opportunities for future generations. But the numbers of hunters and anglers are declining.

Due to changing demographics, competition from other free time activities, and availability of outdoor access, sales of hunting licenses have declined 25 percent and fishing license sales have declined 17 percent since 1980. Another factor impacting license sales is that my generation, the baby boomer generation, is reaching retirement age — the age at which we are no longer required to have hunting or fishing licenses, and we get significant discounts at state parks.

Traditionally, Kansas residents 65 and older have received benefits for their longevity and dedication to our outdoor traditions. Unfortunately for KDWPT rev-

enues, the number of hunters in this age group has increased by 25 percent in the last five years. If we are going to continue providing acceptable levels of services to anglers, hunters, and park patrons, we'll need a broader base of users to help fund the costs. With this in mind, one proposal on our legislative agenda will be to remove the fishing and hunting license exemption for residents 65 and older.

I believe this broader base of support is necessary not only to maintain current programs but perhaps more importantly, to ensure new folks discover the outdoors. If we are to continue our outdoor traditions and have a big enough voice to protect our rights, it is important that we pass it on. Programs such as Archery in the Schools, shooting range development, alternative delivery Hunter Education, special youth hunts, fishing clinics, online boating education, and the Walk-In Hunting Area program must be maintained and enhanced. We must provide safe and convenient opportunities for our growing urban population to discover the fantastic outdoor recreation Kansas has to offer.

Additionally, we will propose legislation to create a Park Passport. Currently, annual vehicle park entrance permits are purchased for the calendar year at a KDWPT office or vendor. With that permit on the windshield, everyone in the vehicle can access any of our 26 state parks without paying the daily entrance fee. The Park Passport would replace the annual vehicle permit and would be purchased at the time of vehicle registration, remaining valid until the anniversary of the vehicle registration. Similar programs in other states have increased permit sales because of the convenience. The program most closely resembling our proposal sold passports to 27 percent of vehicles registered. Depending on the fee set for the Kansas Park Passport, we could double our current vehicle entrance revenues if only 10 percent of vehicles registered opted for the Kansas Park Passport.

There are other issues on our agenda but none have the potential to impact our constituents the way the removing the senior license exemption and the adding the Park Passport could. I am confident that these two changes will positively impact Kansas' outdoor opportunities now and for our next generation. ♡

SHL Members:

Presently, Kansas Residents 65 years of age and older are exempt from buying a hunting or a fishing license should they wish to participate in one or the other, or both.

A bill (Senate Bill 314) has been introduced which will remove this exemption and force these people to find where these items are available and to pay \$20 for each in order to be licensed. This fee, although seeming small, may be a hardship for older Kansans as well as a nuisance. Also, presently there is an exemption for those 16 years of age and younger and this is not scheduled to change.

That means if a Grandparent wants to take a grandchild fishing, they no longer can just head out...but first must find a licensing location and shell out \$20 for the privilege. This probably will effect a number of our older citizens and your SHL Board has determined we should notify you of this change so that you can let your fellow County people know.

We oppose this measure. Other than the above reasons, it would not create enough funds to offset the problems that possibly will occur. And, recently, it has been reported that taxable funds have increased by millions of dollars paid to the State. So, why is this necessary.

Senate Bill 314 is in the Senate Natural Resources Committee and probably was proposed by the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife, Robin Jennison. Mr. Jennison originally was from Healy, Kansas and, in the past was the Speaker of the Kansas House of Representatives. Recently, however, he was a lobbyist for groups in the Kansas Legislature until his selection by the Governor to be the Secretary of this Department. He is appearing this Thursday before that committee to make comments and probably will talk about this bill -- even though a formal hearing has not been announced as yet. Members of that Committee are:

Chair - Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer - Grinnell

Vice Chair - Sen. Carolyn McGinn - Sedgwick

Ranking Minority Member - Marci Francisco - Lawrence

Members:

Sen. Steve Abrams - Arkansas City

Sen. Terry Bruce - Hutchinson

Sen. Garrett Love - Montezuma

Sen. Steve Morris - Hugoton

Sen. Mary Pilcher-Cook - Shawnee

Sen. Allen Schmidt - Hays

Sen. Mark Taddiken - Clifton

Sen. Ruth Teichman - Stafford

If your Senator is on this Committee, you should let them know your opinion and ask them not to even consider the bill. Check with your friends and ask them to do the same. Remember, in the material sent you earlier, the phone number to reach your Senator in Topeka (at the State Library) is 1-800-432-3924 and the way to email them in Topeka is:

(first name).(last name)@senate.ks.gov i.e. [steve.morris@senate.ks.gov](mailto:steve.morris@senate.ks.gov) Your friends can use this information, also.

You should do this right away.

For the SHL Board:

Jim Snyder