

**Testimony on HB 2295 relating to Deer Hunting  
To  
The Senate Committee on Natural Resources**

**By Christopher J. Tymeson  
Chief Legal Counsel  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism**

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HB 2295 seeks to make significant changes to deer hunting, deer permitting and the workload of Department employees. **The Department opposes the provisions contained in the bill.**

Section 1 of the current version of the bill pertains to crossbows. Crossbows are a sociologically divisive issue in the Kansas hunting community. This is not about the biology of deer hunting. Of approximately 16,000 valid responses in the KDWP 2012 deer hunting survey regarding allowing open use of crossbows in archery-only seasons, 8,000 respondents oppose allowing the use, 2,000 respondents were neutral and 6,000 respondents supported allowing the use.

The Department primarily opposes this section because of the statutory mandate involved. Statutory mandates/restrictions over 40 years were what led to the major 2008 deer statutory and regulatory overhaul and the current system of deer management. As such, the KDWP already has authority to allow crossbows during archery-only seasons and in fact, the KDWP Commission is currently set to vote in March on allowing hunters older than 55 and younger than 16 to use crossbows during the archery-only deer and turkey seasons. In addition, crossbows are already allowed during modern firearms seasons and by disabled individuals during the archery season.

In any event, if the bill moves forward with this section, the Department believes the language should be the language contained in only subsection (a) of section 1 or SB 380 (2012).

Section 2 of the bill contains provisions related to pre-rut antlerless rifle deer seasons and a combination antlered and antlerless deer permit. The Department opposes this section again because of the statutory mandate involved. The Department already has authority to implement these items and in fact was looking to implement them in the future but decided not to in 2012.

Again, in any event, should this section move forward, the Department feels the section on pre-rut seasons is incorrectly placed in the bill and it should be a standalone provision.

Section 3 of the bill contains provisions related to directing the workload of Department natural resource officers. The Department opposes this section because it directly interferes with the daily management of executive branch employees and the ability to direct work where needed. In addition, it is not a cost effective venture.

The current deer management system is a direct result of stakeholder participation, including landowners, tenants, hunters, guides and general members of the public. The current system and changes went into effect in 2008 and most of the primary stakeholders exhibited the strong desire to leave the system unchanged for a long period of time. Continued change confuses participants in the system and results in participants leaving deer hunting, which leads to reduced funding as well as fewer people to take deer.

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.**