



DON HINEMAN
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

Testimony as a Proponent
Senate Bill 331

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Chairman Kerschen, Vice Chair Estes, ranking member Francisco and members of the committee, I am grateful for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 331, and specifically that section designating Little Jerusalem Badlands state park. It will be a completely unique state park, unlike any other in Kansas or beyond.

The area in question lies in southern Logan county, and is part of my legislative district. I had the privilege to participate in a tour of Little Jerusalem last fall and was in awe of the unique natural resource that it represents. The acres upon acres of Niobrara chalk columns dwarf the much better-known Monument Rocks in southwestern Gove county and Castle Rock in southeastern Gove county. One gets the feeling that it is almost an other-worldly place as one explores the maze of stone columns and gullies.

I have visited with officials of Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism as well as management of The Nature Conservancy, the entity which owns the property. I feel confident that both teams have similar goals for the area, and they have worked out the details of how best to manage this resource, while simultaneously preserving it for posterity. Only foot traffic will be allowed so as to minimize the impact of human activity. Fossils, primarily clam shells and shark's teeth may occasionally be discovered in Little Jerusalem. However, the sedimentary strata which bear spectacular fossils such as the state fossils Tylosaurus and Pteranodon are much lower than those which formed Little Jerusalem, so the potential for impromptu paleontological digs will be minimized.

Designating this property as a state park will bring it to the attention of both Kansas residents and visitors, inspire all who visit it, and create one more reason for people to explore and enjoy the natural heritage of Kansas.

Thank you for your attention, and I will be happy to stand for questions.