

## **Statement for the Record**

For the House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development regarding House Bill 2331

### **Submitted by:**

Kansas Wildlife Federation

February 21, 2021

The Kansas Wildlife Federation (KWF), on behalf of our 1,200 members, respectfully submits this statement for the hearing record in opposition to HB 2331. If enacted, this bill would severely weaken the incomparable North American Model for Wildlife Conservation by undermining the democracy of hunting in Kansas, damaging KDWPT's ability to use science as the proper tool to discharge wildlife policy, and creating a robust market for the sale or auction of landowner tags to non-resident hunters. This is a bill driven by the financial gain of a few at the expense of the collective. 97% of non-resident deer hunters are successful in receiving a permit in the current system. There is no need for this type of permit.

KWF supports the concept of wildlife resources held in the Public Trust. Private property rights must be respected, but the wildlife are owned by no individual. The Public Trust Doctrine is an inviolate principle of Americanism and is held deeply by Kansans. If enacted, HB 2331 would benefit wealthy non-resident hunters at the expense of the average Kansas hunter by limiting opportunity—a paradigm shift towards the aristocratic models of European societies early North American conservationists wholly rejected.

KWF supports the use of sound science to discharge wildlife policy. If enacted, HB 2331 would hamper the ability of KDWPT biologists to manage the white-tailed deer herd using the best available science, an absolute necessity with the unprecedented threat of chronic wasting disease in Kansas. If enacted, this bill would enable and incentivize thousands more private landowners to obtain landowner permits and sell them to non-resident hunters who were not successful in the permit draw for a given unit. This would almost certainly increase annual harvest numbers beyond set allotments in deer units to levels that would not be sustainable. The subsequent management repercussions of unsustainable levels of harvest would be shouldered by resident hunters, a group already in decline.

It is a privilege for a private landowner to obtain a landowner permit for hunting deer; KWF does not believe it should be the privilege of the private landowner to profit from the sale of that permit—an advantage not granted to general residents. The sale of that landowner permit is the sale of a deer by a third party, the profit from which does not go back to KDWPT to support game management, but into the pocket of the landowner. The natural progression of hunting culture in Kansas, if this bill is enacted, is game camera photos of mature bucks accompanied by price tags posted in an online marketplace. This is a market for game and a breach of one the most widely supported and understood tenet of the North American Model which demands that markets for game are eliminated.

This progression would also erode the trust of the non-hunting public who largely support hunting for meat but do not support trophy-hunting. Non-resident hunters do not come to Kansas to shoot does. As hunters, it is our responsibility to represent our lifestyle to the non-hunting public whose support we need to maintain our hunting heritage.

We urge you to vote against HB 2331. Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Laura Mendenhall  
Board President  
Kansas Wildlife Federation  
Manhattan, Kansas