



Home of Quality Performance Cattle
Smolan/Delphos/Minneapolis

To: House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Representative Sean Tarwater, Chair

From: Joel W. Wimer
C&W Ranch, Ltd.

Re: **Support for House Bill 2331, Providing for the limited transfer of landowner or tenant deer hunting permits to nonresidents.**

Date: February 22, 2021

My name is Joel Wimer. My immediate family and I operate C&W Ranch, predominantly a commercial cow/calf operation specializing in replacement heifer production of Black and Red Angus cattle. We also operate C&W Ranch Bed and Breakfast, and C&W Ranch Outfitting service.

We have been outfitting and guiding upland game hunters for 30 years, turkey and deer hunters for about 18 years, and waterfowl for six years. We operate approximately 6000 acres of land owned and leased in Saline and Ottawa counties. The greatest benefits that we can provide out-of-state fee hunters is a rewarding hunting experience on varied terrain over a 70 mile radius, and comfortable Bed & Breakfast lodging for gentlemen hunters.

We typically net \$30,000 to \$50,000 to our operation in a 50-day period with out-of-state fee hunters. These people also pay for lodging, shotgun shells, rifle rounds, liquor, snack food, restaurants and sporting goods, all taxed on a local and state level.

The income derived from our guide/outfitter service is not a huge percentage of our overall gross revenue. However, in years of very tight commodity revenues and the age-old cost-price squeeze in operating an agricultural entity, every bit of revenue helps in any operation.

It is very difficult to offer the kind of service that we offer when we are limited by exclusive out-of-state permit regulations. All of our hunters are return clientele at least to the core of the groups. Oftentimes, if one person does not draw a permit, one or more additional people in those groups will decline to come that season.

I am totally in favor of HB 2331 reinstating the transferrable landowner hunt-on-your-own-land permits. I was involved in the process that took this ability and right away from landowners and tenants on an observatory level, and I absolutely could not believe it was happening without any input from outfitters/landowners that were involved at the time.

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My reasons for supporting House Bill 2331 are very simple:

1. There is always a need and desire for agricultural operators to maximize their income by utilizing all of the resources on their land owned and leased to the best of their ability.
2. We, as “The Ranch”, operate a fee hunt outfitting/guide service. No-one but fee hunters, family, or employees ever has the opportunity to hunt on our land owned or leased. And this is usually limited to fee hunters only, which adds to the revenue stream of the ranch. Our land would never be allowed to lend itself to in-state non-paid hunters.
3. “Land Ownership” is an “American Right” when a person has the resources to engage in it. The painful exercise of owning land includes making payments, paying property taxes, and intensive maintenance of that property. That exercise and the American Right of Land Ownership should also obviously give the owner the right to utilize the land to its greatest potential.
4. I absolutely do not think that the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, which formerly included “Tourism”, should impede tourism in any way. This should be obvious. By eliminating the transferable landowner or tenant hunt-own-land permits, the department has done just that. Limiting out-of-state hunting, which I understand to be the state’s number one form of tourism, limits tourism dollars into the state, which means limiting tax dollar income on both a local and state level.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel W. Wimer
C&W Ranch, Ltd.