

KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION



The voice of outdoor Kansas

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2167 March 14, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, my name is Spencer Tomb. I am from Manhattan and I am a retired biology professor from KSU. I am here representing the Kansas Wildlife Federation. I am a past president of the KWF, and for eleven years, I was their volunteer lobbyist. I have come out of retirement to oppose HB 2167 for the Federation.

HB 2167 is a bill that will bring back a transferable deer tag for landowners. It will reopen a can of worms. The transferable permit was the most abused permit Wildlife and Parks ever had. This bill will increase the harvest of bucks and cause a decline in the number of mature bucks. 97 % of the non-resident deer hunters are successful in receiving a permit in the current system. There is no need for this type of permit.

Kansas has the highest proportion of non-resident hunters in the Great Plains and Midwest. We also have the least amount of public land. In 2018, 27% of the hunters in the field were non-residents. If you look at the trend, as non-resident hunters increased, resident hunters who pay taxes and vote in Kansas declined. The actual numbers from 2010 to 2018 are in the table below.

Yearly Proportion of Permits by Residency from 2010 to 2018

yr	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.74	0.73	0.72
	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.26	0.27	0.28

Resident deer tags numbers per year

161,177	154,572	137,905	133,375	129,466
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There has been a decline of 31,711 resident permits over a five year period. The most frequent complaint of those who quit deer hunting was a loss of hunting access. There is concern that young families are giving up hunting deer. This new type of tag will make this situation worse. Deer numbers are controlled by taking antlerless deer and it is the resident hunters who do this for the most part.

I testified in favor the bill that started non-resident deer hunting, and I remember distinctly that the expectation by KDWP was that non-resident deer hunters would increase to about 17% and level off. The response by non-resident deer hunters has been much better than expected. It is time to consider putting a cap on the number of non-resident deer hunters, but this bill if passed will increase the number of non-resident hunters.

We consider a transferable tag that is available only to landowners to sell to be a breach of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (NAMWC). Below you will find a synopsis of the model from the US Fish and Wildlife Service website. The most relevant parts are highlighted.

We urge you vote against this bill. I would be glad to respond to questions.

Thank you.

North American Model of Wildlife Conservation

In our nation's early years, there were few laws protecting fish and wildlife and our wildlife resources took a heavy toll. Market hunters took fish and wildlife at will while habitat disappeared under plow and roads, resulting in devastating reductions in wildlife populations. Some species, like the passenger pigeon, were taken to the point of no return; others such as bison, white-tailed deer and wild turkeys, were pushed to the edge of extinction.

As the tides turned for conservation, important laws were passed, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of 1934, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937, and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950. Collectively, these acts laid the foundation for what inspired the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Across North America, hunting was a largely unregulated activity for individuals and commercial entities until the 1800's, when citizens began to ask whether wildlife populations could continue at healthy levels without checks on hunting. The legal framework that has since developed grew out of a set of principles now known as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Seven features make the North American model distinct.

1. **Wildlife is a public resource.** In the United States, wildlife is considered a public resource, independent of the land or water where wildlife may live. Government at various levels has a role in managing that resource on behalf of all citizens and to ensure the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations.
2. **Markets for game are eliminated** Before wildlife protection laws were enacted, commercial operations decimated populations of many species. Making it illegal to buy and sell meat and parts of game and nongame species removed a huge threat to the survival of those species. A market in furbearers continues as a highly regulated activity, often to manage invasive wildlife.
3. **Allocation of wildlife by law.** Wildlife is a public resource managed by government. As a result, access to wildlife for hunting is through legal mechanisms such as set hunting seasons, bag limits, license requirements, etc.
4. **Wildlife can only be killed for a legitimate purpose.** Wildlife is a shared resource that must not be wasted. The law prohibits killing wildlife for frivolous reasons.
5. **Wildlife species are considered an international resource.** Some species, such as migratory birds, cross national boundaries. Treaties such as the Migratory Bird Treaty and CITES recognize a shared responsibility to manage these species across national boundaries.
6. **Science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy.** In order to manage wildlife as a shared resource fairly, objectively, and knowledgeably, decisions must be based on sound science such as annual waterfowl population surveys and the work of professional wildlife biologists.
7. **The democracy of hunting.** In keeping with democratic principles, government allocates access to wildlife without regard for wealth, prestige, or land ownership.