

**Testimony on SB 145 relating to Purchasing Land in Kingman County  
To  
The Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

**By Brad Loveless  
Secretary  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism**

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SB 145 seeks to allow the Department to purchase land in Kingman County. **The Department supports the provisions contained in the bill** and the provisions of the bill would be effective upon publication in the statute book.

The Department is proposing to purchase a piece of property owned by Ducks Unlimited in Kingman County. The property is approximately 493 acres and is adjacent to Byron Walker Wildlife Area. The property contains a portion of the South Fork of the Ninnescah River and attracts excellent concentrations of overwintering mallards where wintering habitat is rare. KDWPPT would buy the property from Ducks Unlimited at appraised market value, using Department fee funds and private donations matched with federal grant funds. The Department would continue to make payments in lieu of taxes in the amount levied on the land.

The proposed purchase of this particular piece of property is the result of a long collaborative process that included local legislators, city and county officials, private landowners and non-governmental stakeholders.

As the committee is aware, less than three percent of the state is publicly owned. Public land is one tool in the toolbox to ensure the long-term health of our native wildlife species through professional wildlife management on those properties. Providing access to hunters and anglers helps uphold Kansas' outdoor heritage and ensures funding for wildlife management through license revenue. Department staff are working to be more strategic in both land that we are trying to purchase as well as that which we are relinquishing. Being near Wichita, the Byron Walker Wildlife area is one of the Department's most heavily frequented properties, averaging more than 60,000 use days/year and generating just under \$7 million in related revenues to the city of Kingman and surrounding communities.

**The Department appreciates the opportunity to address the Committee on the bill and the support of the Committee on the bill.**