

MINUTES OF THE SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Senator Robert Tyson at 8:30 a.m. on February 13, 2003 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

Members present: All members present

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research
Lisa Montgomery, Revisor of Statutes
Shannon Stone, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

J. Michael Hayden, Secretary of Wildlife and Parks, KS Department of Wildlife and Parks
Dr. Tom Warner, Chairman of Kansas Commission Wildlife and Parks
Dan Rudman, Conservationist, Baldwin City, KS
Shawn Harding, Legislative Chairman, Kansas Association of Bowhunters
Rob Manes, Pratt, Kansas
Laura Kelly, Executive Director, Kansas Recreation and Parks Association
Rick Dykstra, President, Kansas Fishing and Hunting Alliance
Terry Bertels, Superintendent of Parks, Topeka Parks and Recreation

Others attending: See attached list

The meeting was opened by Chairman Tyson with a welcome to all guests and those visiting the capitol for Farm Bureau Day activities.

For the first order of business, the Committee voted to approve to send conferee J. Michael Hayden, to the floor for a full Senate vote for confirmation as Secretary of Wildlife and Parks.

Senate Bill 81

An overview of **SB 81** was given by staff, Raney Gilliland. He updated the Committee on changes and new language in the bill.

Proponents of **SB 81** gave testimony following the overview. Opponents of the bill will give testimony Friday, February 14, 2002.

The first proponent to appear before the Committee was Secretary Hayden of the Kansas Department Wildlife and Parks. He gave the Department's purpose for drafting the bill. He stated that Kansas is approximately 97% private owned and as Kansas becomes increasingly urbanized, fewer Kansans have access to land used for recreational/sporting purposes. Additionally, Secretary Hayden sees **SB 81** as a

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long-term solution for preserving habitat for declining species. (Attachment 1) Secretary Hayden then introduced Dr. Tom Warner, Commissioner of Wildlife and Parks.

Dr. Warner distributed a report, *Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission's Working Group on Land Acquisition* to Committee members. He summarized the report and reviewed their recommendations. (Attachments 2, 3) The recommendations included:

- An additional 400,000 acres of lands for hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching and 15,000 acres for state parks.
- Funding for additional wildlife areas from the sale of conservation stamps
- Increased efforts to solicit land donations
- Park funding from the state's portion of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund

The next conferee to appear before the Committee was Daniel Rudman of Baldwin County. In his testimony, Mr. Rudman said that Kansas land was being marketed and sold at an alarming rate and much of the land sold was being used for residential purposes. He would like to see **SB 81** enacted to give Kansas the opportunity to participate in the free market of available land. (Attachment 4)

Shawn Harding of the Kansas State Bowhunter's Association appeared next stating that his membership, supports **SB 81** because of the loss of hundreds of thousands of acres of private hunting ground to private leasing. (Attachment 5)

Rob Manes of Pratt County voiced his support for the bill. According to his research, Kansas rank fourth of the five surrounding states in economic activity from wildlife associated recreation. He believes **SB 81** is necessary to ensure quality of life and economic benefits for Kansans. (Attachment 6)

The next conferee was Laura Kelly, Executive Director of Kansas Recreation and Parks Association (KRPA). KRPA supports the passage of **SB 81** and encouraged its use as a vehicle to address the broader outdoor recreation needs of Kansans at both the state and local level. From their findings, KRPA believes that Kansans want and need more places to play outdoors. They believe that many communities lack the resources to provide recreational outdoor activities that would make their communities attractive places to live or visit. (Attachment 7)

Rick Dykstra, President of the Kansas Fishing and Hunting Alliance believes the Walk-In-Hunting-Area (WIHA) program is only a temporary fix to what he believes to be a long term problem of lack of quality hunting locations for residents and non-residents. He sees **SB 81** as enabling the state to raise funds to start a long-term plan of public land acquisition. (Attachment 8)

The last conferee, Terry Bertels, Superintendent of Parks, appeared on behalf of the City of Topeka to encourage the passage of the **SB 81**. In written testimony, Mr. Bertels acknowledged that the thrust of the

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bill is not directly parallel with the mission of the city's Department of Parks and Recreation, however, he believes that the bill serves the larger need of the city through the acquisition land for public recreational use. (Attachment 9)

During the question and answer session that followed testimony, Chairman Tyson pointed out that the language of the bill did not imply that acquired lands would be accessible to the public. Dr. Warner of KDWP responded that the bill could be reworded to ensure public access. Senator Lee expressed concern that the state would not even be able to purchase enough land to support the number of hunters we have currently. Another concern shared by members of the Committee was that KDWP would not have funds available to maintain lands purchased. Senator Huelskamp recognized a need to address private property rights of landowners.

Adjournment

Senator Tyson closed the meeting by thanking the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for bringing the bill to the Committee. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.