

William Brannan
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Memorandum

February 16, 2016

To: Senate Natural Resources Committee
From: William Brannan and the Brannan Family

Re: Senate Bill 425

Chairman, members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony to you on an issue that is important to me and my family. Today, I'm testifying in opposition to SB 425.

My extended family and I recently completed the donation of a conservation easement to Pheasants Forever and we are happy with our decision. I've always had a passion for wildlife and the granting of our conservation easement is the realization of my life-long dream to leave something for future generations.

My wife Linda and I made our home in Seneca, Kansas where we owned a pest control business, raised our two girls, and became deeply involved in the community. After years of hard work, Linda and I were able to buy a parcel of ground in Nemaha County that we began managing for wildlife, and hunting and fishing with our family. The property has grown to 235 acres - 220 of which are protected with a conservation easement. We've made wonderful memories on our property and spent countless hours managing it for wildlife and natural resources.

In recent years as I watched conversion of wildlife habitat across northeast Kansas, I began pondering the future of area wildlife and what was going to happen to them in coming years. I felt I could do more for wildlife but I wasn't sure how. Then I learned about conservation easements. By donating a conservation easement to Pheasants Forever, I was able to permanently protect a place for wildlife in Nemaha County. The conservation easement allowed me to reach my long-term habitat goals while also allowing me to pass the property onto my heirs. Both of these goals are important to me and without conservation easements I'm not sure how I would have achieved both. My entire family, including my heirs, were involved in this decision and we came to the decision of donating a conservation easement as a family. This was necessary for a number of reasons including the fact that the property is partly owned by my daughters and their spouses.

Conservation easements are a great tool for landowners to use to protect wildlife habitats, wetlands, riparian areas, and places they hold dear.

Landowners should continue to have the right to voluntarily grant conservation easements without approval by the county commissioners so they can realize: direct income opportunities through purchased easements, tax relief through donated easements, estate planning benefits, and long-term habitat planning and natural resource conservation.

In closing, I don't think it is appropriate for any changes to be made to the current Kansas conservation easement legislation. It served my family well and it doesn't require the approval of anyone other than the landowner.

For these reasons, my family respectfully ask you to **vote no** on Senate Bill 425 and leave in place an important conservation tool for Kansas landowners.

Thank you,

William Brannan & Family