

TO: The Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, Chair

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SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 314

Senator Ostmeyer and members of the committee, my name is Spencer Tomb. I am from Manhattan. I am almost 69 years old and not yet retired. I am here in support of Senate Bill 314 which would remove the hunting and fishing license age exemptions for those over 65.

I have followed this issue every time it has been in the Kansas Legislature since 1984. I am a past president of the Kansas Wildlife Federation and a former vice chair of the Board of Directors of the National Wildlife Federation. I am an ardent hunter and serious angler. I have been a volunteer instructor for Wildlife and Parks for over 30 years.

The positions that we have taken in the past in favor of removing the age exemption is based on the fact that hunting and fishing licenses are user fees and users should pay. It is also based on the fact that if a hunter or angler over 65 does not buy a deer or turkey permit and a trout stamp they are lost from the roster of hunters and anglers accepted by the U S Fish and Wildlife Service to calculate the return of hunter and angler excise taxes to Kansas.

Those of us over 65 continue to pay these excise taxes on all of our hunting and fishing equipment, but the share of this fund that comes back to the Sunflower State is less when we are not on the roster of active hunters and anglers. We need to change that.

Hunting and fishing license fees are very minor parts of the overall costs of participating in these important and healthy outdoor activities. Times are changing. We are a more urban society today and fewer people are connected to the land. Fewer young Kansans enter the paying ranks of hunters and anglers. People live longer today and are more active in retirement.

Other states have established reduced fee senior citizen licenses and also lump sum senior lifetime licenses to capture the Federal aid monies.

I think that establishing hunting and fishing license fees for those of us who are over 65 is right direction to take for the future of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. If the exemption is removed, I would like to see some of the funds go toward restoring access to public lands, recruiting new hunters and anglers and retaining these new hunters and anglers.

I would be glad to respond to questions. Thank you.