



The Honorable Larry Powell
Chair, Senate Natural Resources Committee
Kansas Senate
300 SW 10th St.
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairman Powell and Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee:

The National Wild Turkey Federation is a private, non-profit conservation organization with more than 40 chapters and 3,600 members in the state of Kansas. Our mission is the *"Conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of our hunting heritage."* We believe strongly in the rights of private landowners, including their right to conserve the natural resources on their land. We also believe that conservation easements are important to protect the scenic vistas, rivers, streams and water supplies, and the interests and values of the ranching industry, while preventing the destruction of important wildlife habitat.

In the United States, more than 6 million acres of wildlife habitat are developed every year, an area the size of Yellowstone National Park. As collective stewards of our natural resources, we must address this rapid loss of habitat if we are to ensure that wildlife persist for future generations to view, hunt and enjoy. In a private land-dominated state like Kansas, landowners play a significant role in conserving the agricultural, recreational and conservation value of their lands for current and future generations of Kansans. It is our desire to work with willing landowners to offer protections for their properties from future development and we believe a conservation easement should be readily available to all landowners.

If approved, SB425 will add unnecessary restrictions because it passes regulatory authority of conservation easements from the State of Kansas to local County Commissions. These added hurdles within the process of securing a conservation easement will very likely prevent landowners from fruitful pursuit of a conservation easement. Making the process cumbersome for a landowner wishing to enter a conservation agreement is an indirect infringement of their rights to manage and control their private property. Additionally, limiting the duration of a conservation easement, and allowing the grantor to revoke the easement will preclude willing interested landowners from receiving the federal tax benefits for their willing donation to conserve wildlife habitat and open space.

If you have any questions on the NWTF's opposition to SB425, please feel free to reach out to me at any time. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our thoughts and input on why SB425 should not pass and for your service to the people of Kansas.

Sincerely,

Vance Ralstin
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