

TESTEMONY OF LELAND M. QUEAL, REGARDING HB-2208, AN ACT
CONCERNING WILDLIFE; RELATING TO THE TRANSFERABILITY OF DEER
PERMITS.

I was privileged to serve as the Big Game Project Leader for the Forestry Fish and Game Commission when Kansas first began hunting deer in 1965. I spent 15 years with the Department before joining a private-sector wildlife conservation organization. I have been an advocate for sound deer hunting management throughout my 39 year career in the wildlife profession. I have been an active deer hunter up until the 2016 season.

As I understand it, HB2208 would re-establish a transferrable deer permit which would allow a landowner to transfer a regular landowner or tenant hunt-on-your-own-land permit to a non-resident for the purpose of hunting white-tailed deer. It is somewhat different than the transferrable permit program that was used in Kansas several years ago. But, there are two major issues with the transferrable permit system that have not been corrected in this proposed legislation. First, the selling of this transferrable permit for cash is the same as selling wildlife, which is illegal. Secondly it is discriminatory in that it does not allow for equal hunting opportunity within the permitting process.

Our development of the original deer management program was based on the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation, where all wildlife is owned by all of the people. Historically, this model was used by all the States and Canadian Provinces when they began to develop laws and regulations concerning that it was simply understood as the North American system as compared to the European system, where wildlife was owned and managed by the individual landowner. The seven key pillars of the North American Model are as follows.

1. Wildlife as a Public Trust Resource. Wildlife is not owned by the landowner.
2. Elimination of Markets for Game. Wildlife cannot be sold, although parts such as furs may be.
3. Allocation of Wildlife Use by Law. Development of laws and regulations within the several jurisdictions.
4. Kill only for Legitimate Purposes

5. Wildlife as an International Resource, i.e. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
6. Based Wildlife Policy Science
7. Democracy of Hunting - Equal opportunity for all.

Regarding Item 1, wildlife does not belong to the landowner. However, I understand how a landowner who provides habitat and food for wildlife (particularly big game) feel they should be compensated in some way. They can be compensated through the leasing of their land to persons to hunt deer. The potential transfer of deer permits for cash is basically the same as selling wildlife, which is otherwise illegal. They should not be able to sell permits which they or other family members should otherwise be able to use.

Regarding Item 7, Equal Opportunity; Kansas law provides for benefit to individuals of all wildlife programs of the state without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, and military or veteran status. What is officially missing in this litany of potential discrimination categories is “personal wealth”. This personal wealth issue is not a fair and equitable way of distributing the opportunity for additional persons to hunt deer in Kansas. It is clearly discriminatory as it gives special privilege to the wealthy within the agency’s permitting process.

I respectfully urge the Committee to totally reject HB 2208.

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