

February 14, 2017

To: House Agriculture Committee

From: Wes & Mary Beth Traul, 32138 NW Kiowa, Richmond, KS 66080

Subject: House Bill No. 2743

Committee Chairman and Members thank you for this opportunity to address this committee concerning HB 2743. My family and I are cow/calf producers in Anderson, Coffey and Franklin counties. In addition to our cattle operation we operate an Agra tourism business, a hunting lodge located on our ranch.

It is no secret that the ag economy of Kansas has taken a hit in the last few years. For my family the ability to provide hunting opportunities to people from across the nation has allowed us the chance to weather the ups and downs of the market much better than the cattle market alone. In addition, the influx of hunters in our local economy has provided a boost to the local businesses far beyond our own, from purchases of food, fuel, hunting supplies and general maintenance these dollars have flowed through local cash registers numerous times.

It troubles me to hear of the opposition of KDWPT to HB 2743 and their position that passage would lead to the wholesale destruction of the deer herd. 97%-98% of lands of Kansas are in private ownership, thus making the landowners of Kansas the stewards of the habitat supporting the herd. With the passage of this bill the deer herd now takes on new importance to the landowner they are no longer a cost factor on their P&L, but an asset. These landowners now have a reason to improve habitat and begin to manage agricultural land for the benefit of wildlife. HB 2743 allows the landowners of Kansas an assured permit to their property and only their property, thus providing landowners the incentive to become better wildlife managers and the potential for increased income from hunting.