

**Testimony on HB 2621 relating to Purchasing Land in Kingman County  
To  
The House Committee on Agriculture**

**By Brad Loveless  
Secretary  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism**

**February 19, 2020**

HB 2621 seeks to allow the Department to purchase land in Kingman County. **The Department supports the provisions contained in the bill.** The provisions of the bill would be effective upon publication in the statute book.

The Department is proposing to purchase a piece of property owned by Ducks Unlimited in Kingman County. The property is approximately 493 acres and is adjacent to Byron Walker Wildlife Area. The property contains a portion of the South Fork of the Ninnescah River and provides excellent concentrations of overwintering mallards where wintering habitat is rare.

The proposed purchase of this particular piece of property is the result of a long collaborative process resulting in agreement between state and local officials, private individuals and non-governmental stakeholders.

As the committee is aware, less than three percent of the state is publicly owned. Public land is one tool in the toolbox to ensure the long-term health and funding of our native wildlife species by providing access to hunters and anglers as well as professional wildlife management on those properties. The Department is working to be more strategic in both land that we are trying to purchase as well as that which we are relinquishing. Being near Wichita, the Byron Walker Wildlife area is one of our most heavily used properties, averaging over 60,000 use days/year, providing just under \$6 million in related revenues to the city of Kingman and surrounding communities.

**The Department appreciates the opportunity to address the Committee on the bill and the support of the Committee on the bill.**