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To: House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Rep. Sean Tarwater, Chair

From: Tucker Stewart, Associate Counsel, Kansas Livestock Association

Re: **HB 2167 - Establishing a system for the transfer of certain deer hunting permits to nonresidents**

Date: February 19, 2019

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), formed in 1894, is a trade association representing nearly 5,600 members on legislative and regulatory issues. KLA members are involved in many aspects of the livestock industry, including seed stock, cow-calf and stocker cattle production, cattle feeding, dairy production, swine production, grazing land management, and diversified farming operations.

Thank you, Chairman Tarwater and members of the Committee, my name is Tucker Stewart and I am with the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA).

KLA supports HB 2167 because the bill provides landowners and tenants an additional opportunity to facilitate a fee hunting experience with nonresidents of Kansas. In addition, this change of law would allow landowners and tenants an opportunity to provide a hunting experience to nonresident friends and relatives who missed the deadline for application or were unsuccessful in securing a permit in the nonresident draw.

HB 2167 would require the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) to establish a procedure for the transfer of "regular landowner or tenant hunt-on-your-own-land" white-tailed deer hunting permits from the original recipient to a nonresident of Kansas. A transfer could not occur until all nonresident deer hunting permits have been filled in the management unit where the landowner seeks to make a transfer of their permit. In addition, a nonresident successful in the draw for nonresident permits is not eligible to receive a transferable permit. The bill is intended to limit the use of the transferred permit to the land designated by the landowner/tenant when he/she purchases a hunt-on-your-own-land permit. KDWPT would be allowed to charge a transfer fee, not to exceed half the cost of the conventional nonresident deer hunting permit tag.

Why does KLA have an interest in deer hunting and in HB 2167 specifically? I'm often reminded that farmers and ranchers are not just producers of grain, forage and livestock. If you think about it, they are also managers of natural resources, especially the state's privately owned lands. These producers are also entrepreneurs and it's only natural for them to consider alternative and/or unconventional opportunities to generate income that's sustainable and compatible with their existing operation. With the vast majority of property in Kansas being owned by individuals, landowners are truly the gatekeepers to quality hunting in Kansas. While the wildlife in Kansas are technically owned by the state, landowners, not the state, are the caretakers of those animals.

You will hear or read testimony from agricultural producers with experiences in fee hunting. It's not unusual for a Kansas farm or ranch family to rely on recreational services as an added, and important income stream for their operation. In fact, fee hunting has provided an opportunity for the next generation of farmers and ranchers to return home (in rural Kansas) and integrate into their multi-generational operation.

What's limiting or impeding this opportunity for deer hunting in Kansas? The greatest demand for fee hunting is from nonresidents. The only way for these hunters to secure a deer hunting permit is through a drawing. The deadline for applying is well in advance of the deer hunting season in the fall. It's difficult for a prospective nonresident deer hunter and a Kansas guide or outfitter (including farmers and ranchers) to make arrangements for a hunt if there is so much uncertainty about the availability of a permit.

At one time Kansas law allowed landowners and tenants to obtain transferable deer hunting permits and transfer or sell these permits to anyone for use on their property or anywhere within the management unit. KDWPT was successful in convincing the landowner community and the legislature to repeal this law as they were committed to increasing the allotment of nonresident hunting permits to a level that would meet or exceed demand from nonresidents. This change, for the most part, met this objective. In recent years, however, we've received feedback that guides and outfitters are having to turn away business because of the current nonresident permit system. This frustration has led our members to support HB 2167.

KLA encourages this Committee to advance the bill this session and we are willing to work with you and KDWPT to address reasonable and appropriate concerns posed by the bill.

Thank you!