

Diane Glynn

Testimony presented to the Committee on Agriculture as a Proponent for HB 2479

January 27, 2022

Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am a retired State attorney. I currently work as a Pro Tem District Judge for Shawnee County. I have served as a Docent for the Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center since 2017. I have assisted with the ornate box turtle survey by Kansas zoos that began in 2019. I am a lifelong Kansan. I am here today as a private citizen.

Ornate box turtles are dwindling in number. I believe they should be protected. I have read the testimony of Dennis Dinwiddie, the Education Director at the Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center. I have reviewed the laws and am aware of the facts that he shared. I echo his testimony completely. As a participant in the routine physical surveys, I can attest that we have encountered very few ornate box turtles in the platted areas, despite three years of organized searches.

I wanted to add a personal observation through my testimony. I have lived at my current residence in Shawnee County since 1987. It is a section of land that is unbroken by any roads. There are homes on the perimeter of the section, but the center of the section is still very pristine. Five individuals own the bulk of the property. Very few changes have been made to this section in the past 34 years. It consists of primarily native grasses, ponds, and some forested area. It has been, and is still, grazed by cattle and horses. It has been and should still be a haven for box turtles. The surrounding sections of land are the same.

We are a family that spends most of our time outdoors. Early on ornate box turtles were commonly seen passing through our yard, garden, pasture, and crossing the local roads. As our daughter encountered ornate box turtles, we were reminded of our own excitement that we experienced as children. Over the years the three of us noticed and commented that there were fewer turtles passing by each year. I often stopped on the way to and from work to move ornate box turtles across the road. In the past 10 years I have seen very few crossing the roads and have encountered less than a handful in our yard, garden, and pasture.

I want my grandchild and other children to experience the same childhood delight of encountering ornate box turtles that we did. I believe that ornate box turtles, as all wildlife does, serve an important role in the balance of our ecosystem. I believe that ornate box turtles should be protected as they are our official State reptile. Please pass HB 2479 out favorably. Thank you again for your time and consideration.