KANSAS OUTDOOR HERITAGE ALLIANCE

To: House Committee on Local Government, Rep. Emil Bergquist, Chair

From: Kurt Ratzlaff on behalf of Kansas Outdoor Heritage Alliance

Date: February 9, 2026

RE: HB 2363 Conservation Easements

Chairman Bergquist and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposing testimony on HB 2363.

The Kansas Outdoor Heritage Alliance (KOHA) recently came together to provide the Kansas Legislature with the voice of Kansas hunters, anglers, trappers and houndsmen. We represent the interests of the everyday sportsmen and women. KOHA represents Kansans who are not motivated by profit from outdoor activities, but instead dedicate their passion, resources, time, and energy to sustain habitat and wildlife populations. We form the foundation of financial backing for habitat and wildlife conservation.

Organizations United in Opposition to HB 2363

The following organizations, as members of the Kansas Outdoor Heritage Alliance, collectively oppose HB 2363.

- Delta Waterfowl
- Kansas Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Kansas Bowhunters Association
- Kansas Federation of Houndsmen
- Kansas Hunters for Access

Reasons for Opposition to HB 2363

The groups listed above oppose HB 2363 for several key reasons, which are outlined below:

Protecting Private Property Rights

Restricting easements represents an infringement on a landowner's right to determine the future of their property. The ability for owners to leave a "conservation legacy" is a fundamental exercise of these rights.

Ensuring Financial Stability for Landowners

Conservation easements offer critical tax advantages, such as federal income tax deductions and potential reductions in estate taxes. Imposing restrictions may render landowners ineligible for these federal incentives or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funding.

Maintaining Local Economic and Environmental Health

These agreements help safeguard vital resources—such as clean water, healthy soil, and wildlife habitats—that are the foundation of local agriculture and recreation. Conservation easements provide a cost-effective means for the public to benefit from these resources compared to outright government land purchases.

For the reasons outlined above, the Kansas Outdoor Heritage Alliance respectfully urges this committee to oppose HB 2363. We have also attached a recent resolution regarding conservation easements from NASC for your reference. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kurt Ratzlaff

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November 26, 2025

National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC) Executive Council Resolution Regarding the Importance of Voluntary Conservation Easements

Whereas, conservation easements provide important wildlife habitat on our nation's private lands, supporting opportunities for hunters by increasing available habitat for iconic game species while providing many other environmental benefits; and,

Whereas, conservation easements are a completely voluntary, free-market, incentive-based contract – the terms of which are agreed upon by the landowner – for the conservation of natural, agricultural and historical resources on private land; and,

Whereas, conservation easements protect private property rights and enable landowners to monetize the environmental and habitat values of their land; and,

Whereas, perpetual easements ensure that conservation values are managed forever while providing landowners with clearly defined assurances through written easement contracts; and,

Whereas, conservation easements enable agricultural producers to maintain and expand their operations and pass their land on to their heirs, if they so choose, while benefitting rural economies by keeping private land in agricultural production; and,

Whereas, conservation easements provide capital that enables landowners to grow or maintain agricultural operations or reinvest in the landscape.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the undersigned members of the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses Executive Council:

That the Executive Council supports the availability of termed and perpetual conservation easements as an important tool designed to promote conservation practices on private lands while rewarding landowners for their voluntary participation; and,

That efforts to undermine the terms of existing contracts undermine their intent as agreed to by the landowner who chose to enroll the property in an easement program utilizing their property

rights at the time the agreement is made, selling certain land use rights rather than the entire property; and,

That the rights of future generations are important considerations for current landowners, highlighting the importance for families to discuss property decisions, rather than undermining the availability of perpetual conservation easements and their history of success.

This resolution is supported and signed by the following active members of the 2025 National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses Executive Council:

NASC Executive Council President & State Representative Jeffrey Wardlaw (Arkansas)
NASC Executive Council Vice President & State Senator Pat Brennan (Vermont)
NASC Executive Council Secretary & State Senator Jack Bailey (Maryland)
State Representative Nick Archer (Oklahoma)
State Representative C. Scott Bounds (Mississippi)
State Representative Bobby Cox (South Carolina)
State Representative Jesse Chism (Tennessee)
State Representative Amos O'Neal (Michigan)
State Representative Bruce Sassmann (Missouri)
State Senator Robin Webb (Kentucky)
State Representative Steve Wood (Maine)
State Representative Jerome Zeringue (Louisiana)