

Approved: Carl Dean Holmes
Date 3-22-93

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carl Holmes at 3:30 p.m. on March 15, 1993 in Room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Lloyd, excused
Representative Lawrence, excused

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Research Department
April Howell, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Sarah F. Walker, Rattlesnake Steering Committee
Judie Withers, Co-Chairman, Rattlesnake Committee
Meg Walker, Rattlesnake Steering Committee
Larry Graf, Exec. Vice Pres. of National Crotalus Society
Darrell Montei, Dept. of Wildlife and Parks
William Craven, Kansas Sierra Club
Joyce Wolfe, Kansas Audubon Society
Senator Sheila Frahm

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Holmes called the meeting to order and requested a motion to refer **House Concurrent Resolution No. 5020**. Representative McClure made a motion to favorable pass **HCR 5020**. The motion was seconded by Representative Kejr. The motion passed. Representative Gatlin will carry this Resolution on the floor.

The Chair opened the hearing on **SB 137**-Commercial Harvest of Rattlesnakes. This Bill was introduced by Senator Sheila Frahm who appeared before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to speak in favor of this Bill. This Bill was requested by citizens of Wallace County. Several members of the Rattlesnake Committee of Wallace County appeared before the Committee indicating the success of last fall's rattlesnake hunt/roundup and promoted the passage of this Bill because of the future opportunities for economic advancement of this community.

Sarah F. Walker appeared in favor of **SB 137** in that this legislation will allow people in the western counties of Kansas to use one of their regenerating resources, the Prairie Rattlesnake, for their economic benefit and as one area of the state prospers, so does the whole state. (Attachment 1, Pages 9-10)

Judy Withers, Co-Chairman of the Wallace County Rattlesnake Roundup, explained how the Roundup idea was conceived. Due to the location of Sharon Springs off the interstate and lack of tourist attractions, a resource within the area was necessary in order to promote economic development. She stated the success of their first Roundup last fall and proposed some changes in order to attract more participants. (Attachment 1, Pages 2-3)

Meg Walker also presented testimony in support of **SB 137** and outlined the financial success of the event last Fall. She also outlined examples of vendors from different areas which set up during the event and the positive economical impact it had on Wallace County. (Attachment 1, Page 23)

Larry Graf, Executive Vice President of the National Crotalus Society and Crotalintologist, appeared in support of this legislation, because the current laws and regulations are too restrictive as to prevent any significant income from this potential natural regenerating resource. He stated that a favorable vote on this Bill would go along way in helping our communities establish volunteer self-help programs and quite possibly reduce the demand for public funds. (Attachment 1, Pages 11-13)

Darrell Montei, Department of Wildlife and Parks, stated that he opposed the bill in original form, but an amendment was provided for on the Senate side to allow the Department to have management authority. The Bill was amended to provide necessary authority to manage that resource, thereby removing their objections. (Attachment 2)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, Room 526-S Statehouse, at 3:30 p.m. on March 15, 1993.

William Craven, Kansas Sierra Club, presented his testimony in opposition to **SB 137** based upon the fact that the proponents of this Bill seem to want to link the hunting of rattlesnakes with economic development. He outlined detrimental repercussions that would come about in the future if this event was to continue. (Attachment 3)

Joyce Wolfe of the Kansas Audubon Council voiced her opposition of this Bill for various reasons, including but not limited to, age limitations, the method of taking of these snakes and the season of the roundup. (Attachment 4)

Senator Sheila Frahm appeared in support of **SB 137** and stated the potential for economic development for the community if this legislation was passed. She also informed the Committee that Wallace County ranked fifth in a recent newspaper article with the highest proportion of residents who are below the national poverty level, and that this project will positively impact the area. (Attachment 5)

Chairman Holmes opened the floor for questions of the Committee and closed the hearing on **SB 137**.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 16, 1993.

Date: March 15 '93

GUEST REGISTER

HOUSE

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	PHONE
Jim Swackano	Close Up Kan	Colby	
Meg Walker	Rattlesnake Roundup Comm	Sharon Spigo, Mo	852-4428
Judy Walker	" "	" "	852-4473
Sarah Walker	" "	" "	852-4134
Fanny F. Neal	NCS News	Onaga, KS	859-4564
Bill Craven	Ks. Sierra Club	Tyrone	232-8600
Phil Millerham	Seq	Russell Springs, Ks.	786-7676
Douglas C. Wiley	Ks. Audubon Council	Poplar	357-7849
Kenneth Holme		Plains	563-9414
Jennifer Heard	Close Up Kansas	Colby, KS	462-7878
Joe S. SANDLER	Close Up Kansas	Colby, KS	462-7700
Sonya Savaiano	Close Up Kansas	Haven, KS	465-3881
Ray Miller	Close Up Kansas	Partridge, KS	567-2331
Ronald Young	Close Up Kansas	Burton	667-2339
Jennifer Chance	Close Up Kansas	Mt. Hope, KS.	667-2104
Tanya Nisly	Close Up Kansas	Hutchinson, KS.	462-7570
Janet Westfall	" "	Haven, KS 315	465-7718
Scott Todd	Close Up Kansas	Haven, KS	465-2563
Randy Zerr	Close Up Kansas	Colby, Ks.	462-7670
Justin Fox	Close Up Kansas	Poplar, KS	586-2226
Rebecca	" "	Poplar	
Kelly Brown	Close Up Kansas	Colby, KS	462-6661

HOUSE ENERGY & NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Senate Bill No. 137

TESTIMONIES

March 15, 1993

*E. W. R.
Attachment 1
March 15, 1993*

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Senate Bill 137

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SENATE BILL No. 137

By Senator Frahm

1-29

9 AN ACT relating to the commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes;
10 prescribing unlawful acts relating thereto; amending K.S.A. 1992
11 Supp. 32-941 and 32-988 and repealing the existing section
12 sections.
13

14 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

15 New Section 1. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this
16 section, it shall be unlawful for any person to harvest prairie
17 rattlesnakes for commercial purposes.

18 (b) Any person having a valid hunting license may annually
19 obtain a special permit to harvest prairie rattlesnakes upon
20 payment of the fee prescribed therefor by K.S.A. 1992 Supp.
21 32-988. Any person may annually obtain a special nonfirearm
22 permit to harvest prairie rattlesnakes upon payment of the fee
23 prescribed therefor by K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-988. Any such
24 permit shall be valid only for the period of time described in
25 subsection (c).

26 (c) The harvest of prairie rattlesnakes for commercial pur-
27 poses shall only be lawful during the period during a calendar
28 year commencing with March 1 and ending on June 30.

29 (d) Each special permit issued pursuant to this section shall
30 be accompanied by a report form devised by the division of
31 wildlife of the department of wildlife and parks for the purpose
32 of research and conservation studies. Such form shall be re-
33 turned by the special permittee to the division by July 30 next
34 following the termination of the special permit.

35 (e) It shall be unlawful to dispose of any prairie rattlesnake
36 harvested for commercial purposes in any manner at any time
37 except during the time for which a special permit is issued
38 pursuant to this section.

39 (f) As used in this section, commercial purpose means the
40 harvest, taking or possession of five or more prairie rattlesnakes
41 for the purpose of purchase, sale or trading thereof.

42 (g) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to affect the
43 provisions of subsection (c)(2) of K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-1002,

1 ~~and amendments thereto.~~

2 "Section 1. K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-941 is hereby amended to read
3 as follows: 32-941. (a) Except as otherwise authorized by law or
4 rules and regulations of the secretary, a commercial harvest permit
5 is required, in addition to any other license, permit or stamp re-
6 quired by law or rules and regulations of the secretary, to take any
7 wildlife in this state on a commercial basis.

8 (b) Subsection (a) does not apply to:

9 (1) A person acting within the scope of a valid furharvester or
10 valid fur dealer license issued to such person; or

11 (2) a private water fishing impoundment.

12 (c) Subject to the requirements of law and rules and regulations
13 of the secretary, a person may obtain a commercial harvest permit
14 from the secretary or the secretary's designee by making application
15 and paying the fee prescribed pursuant to K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-
16 988.

17 (d) The area and period of time for which a commercial harvest
18 permit is valid shall be in accordance with rules and regulations of
19 the secretary.

20 (e) Any person having a valid hunting license or any person not
21 required to have a hunting license pursuant to K.S.A. 1992 Supp.
22 32-919, and amendments thereto, may annually obtain a special
23 permit to harvest prairie rattlesnakes on a commercial basis upon
24 payment of the fee prescribed therefor by K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-
25 988, and amendments thereto. Any person may annually obtain a
26 special nonfirearm permit to harvest prairie rattlesnakes on a com-
27 mercial basis upon payment of the fee prescribed therefor by K.S.A.
28 1992 Supp. 32-988, and amendments thereto.

29 ~~(e)~~ (f) The secretary may adopt, in accordance with K.S.A. 1992
30 Supp. 32-805 and amendments thereto, rules and regulations nec-
31 essary to implement, administer and enforce the provisions of this
32 section and to govern the taking of wildlife on a commercial basis.

33 ~~(f)~~ (g) Rules and regulations adopted by the secretary pursuant
34 to this section may include, with regard to fishing on a commercial
35 basis, establishment and designation of:

36 (1) Certain portions of the Missouri river bordering on this state
37 and certain streams, lakes and impoundments, or parts thereof, in
38 this state to be open to commercial fishing for such period of time
39 as the secretary specifies;

40 (2) methods and equipment for the taking of fish on a commercial
41 basis;

42 (3) inspections and frequency of inspections;

43 (4) size and specifications of seines, nets, traps and other com-

- 1 *mercial fishing equipment and methods of tagging such equipment;*
 2 *(5) procedures for handling, sale or exchange of fish taken on a*
 3 *commercial basis;*
 4 *(6) species of fish subject to commercial fishing and any size or*
 5 *number restrictions; and*
 6 *(7) a bonding requirement for commercial fishing.*

7 *The secretary may limit commercial fishing to contract only, and*
 8 *the contractor shall provide such reports and information as required*
 9 *by the secretary. In addition to any other penalty prescribed by law*
 10 *for a violation of law or rules and regulations of the secretary*
 11 *pertaining to commercial fishing, the secretary may revoke a com-*
 12 *mmercial fishing contract or refuse to issue such contract.*

13 Sec. 2. K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-988 is hereby amended to read as
 14 follows: 32-988. (a) The secretary is authorized to adopt, in accor-
 15 dance with K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-805 and amendments thereto, rules
 16 and regulations fixing the amount of fees for the following items,
 17 subject to the following limitations and subject to the requirement
 18 that no such rules and regulations shall be adopted as temporary
 19 rules and regulations:

20 *Big game permits*

21 *Resident: minimum \$10, maximum \$100*

22 *Nonresident: minimum \$30, maximum \$400*

23 *Big game tag: maximum \$10*

24 *Combination hunting and fishing licenses*

25 *Resident: minimum \$10, maximum \$30*

26 *Lifetime: minimum \$400, maximum \$600; or 8 quarterly payments,*
 27 *each minimum \$55, maximum \$80*

28 *Nonresident: minimum \$75, maximum \$125*

29 *Commercial dog training permits: minimum \$10, maximum \$25*

30 *Commercial guide permit or associate guide permit: maximum \$50*

31 *Commercial harvest or dealer permits: minimum \$10, maximum \$200*

32 *Commercial prairie rattlesnake harvesting permits*

33 *Resident or nonresident with valid hunting license: ~~\$3~~ maximum*
 34 *\$5*

35 *Resident or nonresident nonfirearm without valid hunting license:*
 36 *~~\$20.50~~ maximum \$20*

37 *Controlled shooting area operator license: minimum \$200, maximum*
 38 *\$400*

39 *Duplicate licenses, permits, stamps and other issues of the depart-*
 40 *ment: maximum \$10*

41 *Falconry*

42 *Permits: minimum \$50, maximum \$300*

43 *Examinations: minimum \$25, maximum \$100*

- 1 Field trial permits: minimum \$10, maximum \$25
- 2 Fishing licenses
 - 3 Resident: minimum \$5, maximum \$15
 - 4 Lifetime: minimum \$200, maximum \$300; or 8 quarterly payments,
 - 5 each minimum \$30, maximum \$45
 - 6 Nonresident: minimum \$15, maximum \$50
 - 7 Five-day nonresident: minimum \$5, maximum \$15
 - 8 Institutional group: minimum \$100, maximum \$200
 - 9 Twenty-four-hour: maximum \$3
- 10 Fur dealer licenses
 - 11 Resident: minimum \$50, maximum \$200
 - 12 Nonresident: minimum \$50, maximum \$400
- 13 Furharvester licenses
 - 14 Resident: minimum \$10, maximum \$20
 - 15 Nonresident: minimum \$50, maximum \$400
- 16 Game breeder permits: minimum \$2, maximum \$15
- 17 Handicapped hunting and fishing permits: maximum \$5
- 18 Hound trainer-breeder running permits: minimum \$10, maximum
- 19 \$25
- 20 Hunting licenses
 - 21 Resident: minimum \$5, maximum \$15
 - 22 Lifetime: minimum \$200, maximum \$300; or 8 quarterly payments,
 - 23 each minimum \$30, maximum \$45
 - 24 Nonresident: minimum \$25, maximum \$75
 - 25 Controlled shooting area: minimum \$5, maximum \$15
 - 26 Forty-eight-hour waterfowl permits: maximum \$25
 - 27 Migratory waterfowl habitat stamps: minimum \$3, maximum \$5
- 28 Mussel fishing licenses
 - 29 Resident: minimum \$25, maximum \$200
 - 30 Nonresident: minimum \$50, maximum \$400
- 31 Rabbit permits
 - 32 Live trapping: maximum \$200
 - 33 Shipping: minimum \$25, maximum \$400
- 34 Raptor propagation permits: maximum \$100
- 35 Rehabilitation permits: maximum \$50
- 36 Scientific, educational or exhibition permits: maximum \$10
- 37 Wildlife damage control permits: maximum \$10
- 38 Wildlife importation permits: maximum \$10
- 39 Special permits under K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-961: maximum \$100
- 40 Miscellaneous fees
 - 41 Special events on department land or water: maximum \$200
 - 42 Special departmental services, materials or supplies: no maximum
 - 43 Other issues of department: no maximum

1 Vendor bond: no maximum

2 (b) The fee for a landowner-tenant resident big game hunting
3 permit shall be an amount equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ the fee for a general resident
4 big game hunting permit.

5 (c) The fee for a furharvester license for a resident under 16
6 years of age shall be an amount equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ the fee for a resident
7 furharvester license.

8 (d) The secretary may establish, by rules and regulations adopted
9 in accordance with K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-805 and amendments
10 thereto, different fees for various classes and types of licenses, per-
11 mits, stamps and other issuances of the department which may occur
12 within each item as described under subsection (a).

13 Sec. 3. K.S.A. 1992 Supp. ~~32-988~~ *is 32-941 and 32-988 are*
14 hereby repealed.

15 Sec. 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after
16 its publication in the statute book.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 137

As Amended by Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources

Brief*

S.B. 137, as amended, would amend a section of current law to allow the issuance of an annual permit to harvest prairie rattlesnakes on a commercial basis to any person having a valid hunting license or to individuals exempted pursuant to K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-919. Additionally, the bill would allow the issuance of a special nonfirearm permit to harvest prairie rattlesnakes on a commercial basis to any other person. Maximum fees for these permits would be established by the bill. The maximum permit fee for a resident or nonresident with a valid hunting license or otherwise exempted would be \$5.00. The maximum fee for a nonfirearm permit for a resident or nonresident without a valid hunting license would be \$20.00.

Background

This bill was introduced by Senator Frahm who appeared before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to speak in favor of the bill. She indicated that the bill was requested by citizens of Wallace County. Testimony indicated that the citizens of Wallace County had conducted their first rattlesnake hunt last fall. Several citizens from Wallace County appeared before the Committee indicating the success of last fall's event and stated it was an economic development measure.

A spokesperson from the Kansas Herpetological Society appeared in opposition to the bill. He opposed the bill because there is a lack of evidence that the population of the species can be sustained with a harvest as proposed in the bill. A spokesperson from the Department of Wildlife and Parks appeared before the Committee. This spokesperson pointed out several problems with the bill and

* Supplemental Notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent.

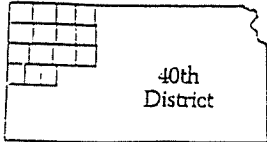
indicated the agency's opposition to the bill in its original form. A spokesperson for the Kansas Audubon Council appeared before the Committee and expressed concerns about the bill.

2-137

KANSAS SENATE



SHEILA FRAHM



985 S. RANGE
COLBY, KANSAS 67701
913-462 6948

OFFICE OF THE
MAJORITY LEADER

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1504
913-296-2497

MEMBER:
AGRICULTURE
LEGISLATIVE COORDINATING COUNCIL
ORGANIZATION, CALENDAR AND RULES
STATE FINANCE COUNCIL
VICE CHAIR:
EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
FROM: Senator Sheila Frahm
DATE: February 11, 1993
RE: SB 137

Chairman Sallee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to bring SB 137 to your attention. This bill was requested by citizens of Wallace County who are committed to the future and to the quality of life in their community.

This past fall Wallace County hosted their first annual *Rattlesnake Hunt*. As a result of this successful event, and with expectation for a second and many future events, they are requesting your consideration of several proposals which will assist with their project. This event has potential of being an economic development for the entire community. In a recent newspaper article, I noticed that Wallace ranked fifth among counties with the highest proportion of residents below the national poverty level. These citizens want to do all they can to assure their future and the future for their children and grandchildren.

Just for your background information, Wallace County, which compromises 914.1 square miles, has a population of 1821. That is just under two people per square mile. Though a specific count is difficult, there are undoubtedly more rattlesnakes than people in Wallace County.

Your favorable attention to this local concern is appreciated.

Judie Withers
Sharon Springs, Ka.

The Sharon Springs Rattlesnake Roundup idea was conceived about three years ago because of the economic stress of the community. Due to our location off of the interstate highway and no major tourist attraction, we searched for a resource within the area which could bring outside dollars into the community. We continue to be an economically stressed area. According to the Wichita newspaper of last Monday, Feb. 8, 1993, "Wallace county is one of five Kansas counties with 20% of the residents having income below the federal poverty level of \$12,675 per year". Income gained from an event of this type would be used for community improvements not otherwise possible. We feel that in time the businesses will develop sales ideas to gain individual profit from visiting tourism, but we must be able to grow for this to happen and to grow we must have additional enticements for hunters.

Upon combining the interests for economic development, sporting enthusiasts, and tourism development we undertook our first rattlesnake roundup. It was during the planning and execution of our first event that its apparent impact and effect through educational and conservation measures became evident. Many conservation and educational suggestions offered by Dr. Henry Fitch, Randall Reiserer, and David Reber have been accepted and put into place. Most of the men handling the snakes between the shows are present or retired teachers, some holding Masters degrees. We have invited both Dr. Fitch and other herpetologists to return to continue their research, to provide a booth of their own to present additional educational material, and to lecture during the butchering process which will be placed in a more remote area. We have agreed, also, to set a minimum size and encourage research and conservation reporting for the future protection of the animal.

We feel that our event was highly successful with "no problems of violence or anti-hunting activity reported" as written in the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks report of October 20. The herpetologists attending were supportive of our efforts as written by Randall Reiserer and David Reber in their report to the K.H.S.. "We were impressed both by the responsibility with which the festival was organized and by the open-mindedness of many of the residents of Sharon Springs. The people of Wallace county are farmers and ranchers who live close to the land and who understand much more about it than some people credit them with."

By making the proposed changes we could attract more participants. Kansas residents would be able to purchase a non-firearms permit at a slightly higher fee than the present hunting license, but would not be required to take the hunters safety course which involves firearms. Kansas residents holding a current license could obtain the special permit at a small additional fee of \$3. At the present time the cost of the non-resident license is \$60.50 while only five snakes are allowed to be caught and still they cannot be sold. This is not a good

return on their investment and these changes would make it more feasible for the hunter and in turn make an additional income for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Both Dr. Fitch and George Pisani indicate in their report that "the disassembled parts skin, head, rattles, gall bladder and meat are all salable, retailing for a combined total usually more than \$35". That generates a substantial income in Oklahoma and Texas but is illegal in Kansas. Hunters in Kansas are missing out on this product. At our Rattlesnake Roundup we sold snake novelties from other states while the Department of Wildlife and Parks forced us to destroy the snake heads and return the skins to the hunter who mostly did not have the experience or the desire to tan and preserve properly, but they were not allowed to sell these skins to a taxidermist. Most, I believe, were wasted.

In reading some of the reports of our event, I have found numerous errors and misquotes. I have included the correct information on a separate sheet.

As I understand the history, the law which was revoked in 1990 dealing with commercialization of reptiles and amphibians was done so to protect the Kansas box turtle from pet stores. It was not intended as a protector or regulator of the prairie rattlesnake.

The question is how can we improve the Kansas Rattlesnake Roundup? We recommend that you approve our suggestions in order to make Kansas Rattlesnake hunting a conservation tool, a profit to the community and inviting for non-residents as well.

REPORT OF THE 1992 SHARON SPRINGS RATTLESNAKE ROUNDUP

74 registered hunters

28 from Wallace county

46 other parts of Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma

445 attended business-sponsored free ham and bean feed.

Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri

75 snakes brought in

26 hunters bringing in snakes

\$5113 "gate" intake @ \$4 for adults and \$1 for children

2000 estimated attendance (based on gate intake)

\$13112 total receipts

\$9512 total expenses

\$7500 spent in Wallace county on lumber, food,
novelties, insurance, and motels.

\$1000 donation to Wallace County Pride who in turn
designated this amount for new county brochures.

\$1000 donation to Wallace County JayCees for community
projects.

\$1600 remaining in Rattlesnake Roundup account for 1993.

Each hunter was furnished the following in their packet:

Kansas Rules & Regulations

Medical information including first aid steps and
locations of nearest hospitals

Map indicating local landowners who were agreeable to
have hunting.

Dr. and Mrs. Henry Fitch and two K.U. students were in
attendance gathering data for Kansas Department of
Wildlife and Parks.

The hunting participants were not charged a registration
fee.

The rattlesnakes in the pit were not "fixed in some way"
as cited by Dr. Fitch. They were as they were brought in
from the field.

February 11, 1993

I would like to take this opportunity to Thank You for allowing us to meet with your committee. We feel that the issues at hand are key factors in determining the future success of any Rattlesnake Hunt across the State of Kansas.

The main issue I would like to address is the impact our Rattlesnake Hunt had on our community, county and the State of Kansas.

For the most part, rural Kansas doesn't have a big calling card for tourism. The Rattlesnake Roundup was a good way to promote tourism to the Western half of the state. So many people think that Kansas stops at about Hays, KS without giving us in extreme Western Kansas a second thought. The Rattlesnake Roundup was a big enough drawing card for people all over the state that we feel that the aspect of tourism was very beneficial to the State.

Another benefit that the State received was the fact that we had people from as far as Kansas City at our snake hunt. These people traveling across Kansas eventually stopped and purchased something, somewhere. Whether it was gasoline, food or lodging, the town in which it was purchased benefited from the revenue.

Our Rattlesnake Roundup was a good promotion for the State of Kansas as far as advertising. The Associated Press picked up our news releases and ran them in the majority of the larger newspapers in the state, as well as in surrounding states. At least people know now that there is more to Kansas than just tornadoes, Dorothy and Toto!

As far as the impact on our County and Community is concerned, we feel the Snake Hunt was a definite asset. We estimated 2,000 people through our gates for the weekend. These same 2,000 people brought new money into our community. They spent their money on our gate admissions, T-Shirts, crafters etc., as well as in our businesses, including our restaurants and motels. The Snake Hunt brought our small community of less than 1,000 people back to life for that weekend. It stirred up an excitement and enthusiasm in our county that had been lacking for quite some time.

From the income and expense sheets that I handed out, you can see that a large portion of our expenses were spent right in our own county. This was just one of the few benefits that our county businesses received as a result of the Snake Hunt. As far as the income, over \$11,000.00 was spent at our Snake Hunt on gate admissions, T-shirts &

February 11, 1993

caps, etc... for the 2 day weekend. We were very pleased with the \$11,000.00 we took in considering that we couldn't commercialize or sell any portion of our snakes, as other states do.

In smaller communities, such as ours, we are always looking for a way to promote tourism and to help our economy. To be able to use a natural resource, such as the rattlesnake, could mean a whole new industry for Wallace County, as well as any other County in Kansas wanting to organize a Snake Hunt.

Our landowners were more than happy to give hunters permission to hunt and our hunters, likewise, were very appreciative of the landowners. Although there weren't a large number of snakes caught, our landowners expressed some benefit in the reduction of numbers.

Even though it was not that much of an economic impact, the dance that was held on Saturday night was a good social drawing card for our community. It gave local citizens a chance to mingle with the out-of-towners. People were able to visit, socialize and meet new friends.

I am sure that there were beneficial spinoffs from our Snake Hunt that we probably aren't aware of, and will probably never know, but we do feel that there were more positive things came out of our Hunt than negative.

Any future hunt will benefit from the notoriety already established from our very first Kansas Rattlesnake Roundup. This will probably be our biggest benefit as coordinators of the Hunt.

Thank You.

Debbie Fischer
Co-coordinator
Rattlesnake Roundup
Sharon Springs, KS

Actual

INCOME

1992 RATTLESNAKE ROUNDUP

Donated Items:

First National Bank	\$1,000.00
Ruth Fletcher	100.00
Lyle Finley Trust	225.00
Donation from Merchants for Ham & Bean Feed	575.00
Smoky Valley Bean Inc. - 200 lbs. pinto beans	40.00
Heartland Mill - cornbread mix (100 lbs)	75.00

Loans:

PRIDE	500.00
Ruth Jackson	100.00

Other Sources of Income:

Snake Show Gate Receipts (estimated 2000 paid)	5,113.76
Pop Shack Receipts	622.55
Rolls from the snake meat	114.00
Hamburger Fry Receipts	378.10
Fishing Pit Receipts	57.51
Vendor & Crafter Receipts	622.25
T-Shirt, Caps, & Patch Sales	4,353.71

Sales Tax collected from Crafters & Vendors	42.87
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Total Income	13,919.75
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EXPENSES

1992 Rattlesnake Roundup

Repayment of Loans:

Ruth Jackson	\$ 100.00
PRIDE	500.00
Stamps for vendor letters	29.00
T-Shirts (350)	
Caps (300)	
Patches (200)	
Staff Shirts (36)	3,695.87
Insurance	552.44
Receipt Book	21.40
Reimbursement for EDA T-shirts	71.00
Wallace County Coop (Woodchips) 3-50 lb. Bales	18.88
Pepsi- Cola 35 units @ \$2.40 each	156.00
" " Cups (6-12 oz. & 11-20 oz. @ 3.00 ea.	51.00
KBS TV (Commercial)	192.00
Hennick Lumber (Snake Pit Supplies)	381.08
Morford Publishing (Paper for Flyers)	38.87
(Advertising)	4.10
(Thank You)	34.05
Pond Creek Supply (Poster Board, Markers, Copies Fax, Misc. supply)	54.89
Chuck Paul (Trash Service)	22.00
Faye Unruh (Rolls for snake meat) 1,000 @ 30¢ ea.	300.00
Breaker Box & Outlets for Fairgrounds (220)	371.61
Johnson Septic Tank (6 Port-a-Potties)	346.00
Snake Show Expense -	
Fangs & Rattlers	600.00
Waynoka, OK snake handlers	250.00
Motel rooms for snake handlers	530.74
Wallace County Free Fair (Electricity)	100.00
Insufficient Check Returned	27.00
Sales Tax	567.26
Hamburger Fry expense	192.96
Ham & Bean Feed 200 lbs. pinto beans	40.00
100 lbs. cornbread mix	75.00
misc. expense	388.32
Pop Shack (Ice)	29.88
Snake Meat expense (oil, breeding, paper products)	36.49
Misc. Supplies	10.48
Prize Money for the Hunters (Lottery drawing)	200.00
1st place (diamond back)	35.00
1st place (Prairie)	100.00
2nd " "	75.00
3rd " "	50.00
Proceeds given to Wallace County PRIDE	1,000.00
" " " Wallace County Jaycees	1,000.00
Proceeds put into mutual account for next Hunt	1,671.43
Total Expenses	13,919.75

This bill will generate more income for our area and our state. At our first Rattlesnake Roundup we had over 2000 people including tourists from six states attending the events. The special hunting permits will provide more income to the state by attracting many additional out of state people to our state and our western counties.

These are some of the few reasons I am urging you to support SENATE BILL No. 137.

by Sarah F. Walker
314 Ericson
Sharon Springs, Ks 67758

SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING

FEBRUARY 11, 1993 - 8:00 AM

Statement in favor of SENATE Bill No. 137:

This bill will allow people in the western counties of Kansas to use one of their regenerating resources, the Prarie Rattlesnake, for their economic benefit and as one area in our state prospers so does the whole state.

With the commercialization of this regenerating resource conservation, education, and management will follow. It has been proven over and over, that until man considers something in Nature a USEFUL RESOURCE, he will not practice conservation and good management. At this point the ranchers, farmers and most people in that area just kill rattlesnakes because of the danger they represent in their work and damage to livestock. To quote Joseph T. Collins, from his book AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN KANSAS, "Unlike the timber rattlesnake, this species (the prarie rattlesnake) is quite aggressive and has a nasty disposition..... and should be recognized as the most dangerous venomous snake in Kansas." Since our first roundup, many ranchers and farmers are changing their attitude. They will let the hunters hunt the snakes instead of just killing them and leaving them to rot in the fields.

This bill will make provisions for a more accurate count of the snakes caught. This could become a very useful tool for the conservation and management of our Prarie Rattlesnake. One of our long range ideas is to develop a Wallace County Wildlife Preserve.

15 March 1993
3:30 P.M.

SENATE BILL No. 137 by Senator Frahm

AN ACT relating to the commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes; prescribing unlawful acts relating thereto; amending K.S.A. 1992 SUPP. 32-941 and 32-988 and repealing the existing section.

My name is Larry Graf, I was born, raised and live in Onaga, Kansas, located 50 miles north west of Topeka. Currently, Onaga is in Representative Rezac's district.

I am the Executive Vice President of the National Crotalus Society, a member of the Kansas Herpetology Society, the Audobon Society and Publisher of N.C.S. News. By definition, a herpetologist is one who studies all reptiles. My avocation is the specialized study of the larger bodied rattlesnakes, making me a Crotalintologist.

Crotalus is the scientific name for one of the two Genus of rattlesnakes, Crotalus being the more numerous and the larger bodied snake of the two. Both the National Crotalus Society and N.C.S. News were established in the fall of 1992 for the gathering and dissemination of information concerning rattlesnakes and rattlesnake hunting and is dedicated to the preservation of the species and the hunt through education. The first issue of our news publication (over 21,000 copies) is being distributed in 33 States. I am also a Jaycee International Senator and have been involved with the Jaycee movement for over twenty years. Over half of all the snake hunts in the United States are sponsored either wholly or in part by the Jaycees. I would like to speak in favor of Senate Bill No. 137.

more

There are a few noted herpetologist in the United States who have said that Rattlesnake roundups serve no useful purpose and should be prohibited. In this part of the country, when the conservationists decry the sins of snake hunting, they, more often than not, use as an example, the Sweetwater Texas Jaycees round-up. Conservationists use Sweetwater because it is billed as the world's largest round-up, and it does produce the largest number of snakes of any hunt in the United States. The extraordinary high numbers of snakes involved are quoted to promote alarm among herpetologists and the general public. What is not mentioned, is the great deal of good that comes from this round-up.

Today's Round-up pumps 1 and a half to 2 Million dollars into the town's economy annually. These funds go to a lot of worthwhile causes in the area. To begin with there is the Sunshine Inn, a school that helps mentally disadvantaged adults develop employable work skills.

(SEE ATTACHED LIST)

In the beginning, the Sweetwater Rattlesnake Round-up, like all hunts or round-ups just getting started, had its humble origins. The Round-up began with a simple purpose in mind as a Community Development project. Local ranchers and farmers were having problems with damage to livestock due to the snake's bite, not to mention the number of bites being received by humans as well. After 33 years and literally tons of snakes taken, Rattlesnakes and man still live in an uneasy relationship with

each other in Texas. For example, since the 1992 round-up, over 37 animal bites and six human bites have been reported in or near Sweetwater. SO MUCH FOR THE RATTLESNAKE BEING EXTINCT IN SWEETWATER.

Conservationists are continually trying to paint the people who participate in snake hunts as mindless environmental rapist, bent on the total destruction of the rattlesnake population. Nothing could be further from the truth. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if you kill the goose that lays the golden egg..... In Oklahoma, commercial harvesting has been going on for almost a half a century. A 1988 study, sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife, was conducted by two Kansas University professors, Doctors Henry Fitch and George Pisani. Their findings concluded that Oklahoma's diamondback rattlesnakes are holding their own despite heavy harvesting each spring in the state's snake hunts.

Our current laws and regulations are so restrictive as to preclude any significant income from this potential natural regenerating resource. A favorable vote on Senate Bill No. 137 would go along way in helping our communities establish volunteer self-help programs and quite possibly reduce the demand for public funds.

-end-

1-22

SWEETWATER, TEXAS

ROUND-UP CHARITIES

- **Sunshine Inn**
 - Helps mentally disadvantaged adults
 - * Develop employable work skills.
 - * Provide supplies to school building.
 - * Pays utilities.
 - * Provides Van for transportation.
 - * Provides building upkeep.
- Youth Softball and Baseball Programs
- Shooting Education Courses
- Just Say No Program
- Scouting
- Youth Soccer
- Halloween on the Square
- Support of a drug-free high school graduation night
- Junior Livestock Show
- Santa Claus call-ins
- Jaycees' Annual Thanksgiving diner for the needy
- Support for the Ben Richie Boys Ranch
- Labor Day weekend rest stop
- Blood Drive
- Weekly Bingo at Nursing-Homes
- Nolan County Crimestoppers
- Hospice Programs
- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- MDA
- Lake Sweetwater 4th of July Fireworks Display

And a list of other civic and cultural causes.

Jim Withers
Sharon Springs, Ks.

Committee Members:

As a rancher and farmer in Wallace county, I would like to furnish you with some information which is supportive of the rattlesnake roundups and my knowledge of the abundance of the prairie rattlesnakes in the area.

We are owners, partners, and caretakers of a 14,000 acre ranch in Wallace county. We deal with the prairie rattlesnake often and know there are more snakes than we see. Once when we burned out a mile of fence we found 17 dead rattlesnakes when we went back to put out the posts. This means that without seeing these as we went by with the weed burner, we walked by this many in one mile. If you would assume this number is typical of an average mile of fence then we would see that in our 50 miles of fence we could find approximately 1140 snakes in the fence-rows alone on our ranch.

We have had cattle, pigs, and dogs bitten by rattlesnakes with some being fatal. The local veterinarians have furnished me with the following figures: *Whitmore Veterinarian Clinic (Goodland)*: treats about 13 incidents of rattlesnake bite each year, but once treated 5 in one month.

Dr. Mike Dodd (Oakley): treats about 8-10 each of cattle, dogs, and horses during a year.

As Dr. Henry Fitch stated in his article for the *N.C.S. News*, "Drastic reduction of the snakes may be justified on specific areas of private land where they are actually abundant enough to constitute a hazard to humans and cause occasional losses of valuable domestic animals".

We support this change as a means of encouraging more hunters to come to Wallace county.

1-24

It is my pleasure to be able to meet before this committee to express to you some of the economic values of the proposed amendments to K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-988.

I have had the pleasure of serving Wallace County in the capacity of economic development director for the past 5 1/2 years. Within that time it has become increasingly evident that the most successful way of stimulating and increasing the economy in Wallace County is through the developing and adding value to resources already available within the county. Though the idea of harvesting rattlesnake is not often considered when speaking in terms of "value added", it does meet the implied criteria of "value added". We are asking that through the proposed amendments, we be allowed to use this natural resource of the area as a catalyst for tourism, trade, and education.

To be given the opportunity to harvest and sell the products of the rattlesnake would depreciate the wastefulness presently being preserved by the law. For those in the business of taxidermy, crafts and venders, being provided the opportunity to utilize the byproducts of the snake would allow them to generate commerce with the resources of the area.

It is known that tourism is now the 2nd largest industry in the United States, and should be recognized as a chance for economic expansion for communities of all sizes. Tourism opens opportunities for capturing outside dollars into a community. The opportunity for

It is not my intent to stand before you today to suggest that the proposed changes to the present law would cure all the ills of Wallace County or any community. I am here to suggest that these changes will help to open a window of opportunity for a community that is exercising their desire to be creative and use (not abuse) the resources at hand to help generate a vitality that is so important and yet so difficult to maintain in our rural communities.

Brenda Beringer
Economic Development Director
Sharon Springs, KS

February 9, 1993

Senate Committee of Energy and Natural Resources
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Committee Members:

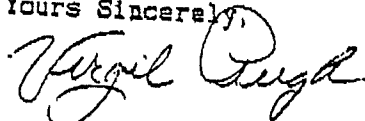
Please allow me to present my credentials which I feel give credibility to my forthcoming statements. I have been an avid outdoor fan since being old enough to venture into nature. I am a professional in my field of speech pathology and education. I have been employed by the Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation of Kansas for the past 20 years. My number one hobby for the past 30 years has been hunting and studying rattlesnakes. I am a pit handler in the Okeene, Oklahoma Rattlesnake Roundup, which is the oldest rattlesnake hunt in the United States. In this capacity I have been provided with many hours of observation and educational opportunities.

I believe not only in preservation of species but also in harvesting and managing our animal resources on a controlled basis. We have hunted the Okeene area for over 50 years and we still have an abundant rattlesnake reserve. Senate bill 137 is proposing a similar project for our own state of Kansas which I feel is feasible and long over due. In a controlled method such as Senate bill 137 is proposing we can manage the Kansas rattlesnake population just as well.

In these times of economic stress it is also worth noting the economic impact for western Kansas that controlled hunts could provide.

With my experience and background in hunting and capturing rattlesnakes, I see no reason why we Kansas can't enjoy similar activities right here at home. We have the snake resource so why not capitalize on it? I think Senate bill 137 should become a reality of law.

Yours Sincerely,



Virgil Pugh
Director
Adult Day Care Program
2411 Jardine
Wichita, Kansas 67719

February 9, 1993

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in reference to the legislation of buying and selling Rattlesnakes in Kansas. I have lived in Kansas all of my life. I grew up Goodland, Kansas and presently live in El Dorado, Kansas. I have taught Biology and Taxidermy at El Dorado High School for the last 28 years. I would very much like to see the present laws protecting reptiles ammended to exempt the Rattlesnake.

I have gone to Rattlesnake hunts in Oklahoma the last several years. I have helped the Waynoka Saddle Club with the butchering and selling of meat and skins. I have mounted numerous snakes for hunters in Oklahoma. I also use the snake skins, rattles and vertebrae to make items to sell at the hunts and at craft fairs.

The ranchers and farmers would benefit greatly if the law is ammended. The presence of the Rattlesnake is a danger to the families and live-stock of the area ranchers and farmers. A community will also benefit in organizing a Rattlesnake Hunt. Hunters will need hotels, motels gasoline and food during their hunt.

Legalizing the buying and selling of Kansas snakes would benefit Kansas taxidermists and craftsmen. As it is now, we must purchase the snakes from Oklahoma hunts.

I am 100% for the conservation of our resources but I feel an annual snake hunt in Northwestern Kansas would be a positive move for the area residents, hunters and taxidermists. I do hope you reconsider the matter and help to ammend the present legislation to exempt the Rattlesnake from protection.

Sincerely,



Tom Kinder
Wildlife Trophies
R.R.3 Box 30
El Dorado, Kansas 67042

STATEMENT OF MARCIEA C. WEAVER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

SHERMAN COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

GOODLAND, KANSAS

REFERENCE:

RATTLESNAKE ROUNDUP

SHARON SPRINGS, KANSAS WALLACE COUNTY

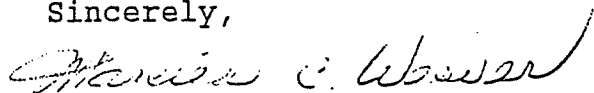
It is my pleasure to present this statement concerning the Rattlesnake Roundup of Sharon Springs. In addition to being Assistant Director of Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, I contract with Northwest Kansas Travel Council to manage 6 sport, boat and travel shows. Northwest Kansas Travel region is composed of 16 counties in the upper Northwest corner of Kansas.

The travel shows are judged by the amount of interest in brochures at each show, according to studies done on this subject success is based on an interest of .2% of total attendance. Kansas City, Missouri had an attendance of 116,000 and .5% picked Rattlesnake Roundup brochures as an interest to them. Tulsa, Oklahoma had 85,000 attendance and .4% had an interest in Rattlesnake Roundup. This is enough evidence to indicate there is a vital interest in rattlesnake hunts in Kansas.

Sharon Springs stages a professional Rattlesnake Roundup and certainly warrants favorable recognition from the State of Kansas and Kansas Wildlife and Parks. Sherman County realized a marked increase during the 1st Roundup, our motels, services, retail and food businesses all reported increased sales. This indicates the Rattlesnake Roundup is a marketable Tourist Attraction for Kansas.

Thank you for reading my statement concerning Rattlesnake hunting in Kansas. Our small rural communities are having a hard time surviving and Sharon Springs/Wallace County have invented a very ingenious idea. I urge your support for Rattlesnake Roundup.

Sincerely,



Marciea C. Weaver, Sherman Co. CVB

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE HEARING

Committee Chairman and members:

We are life time residents of Kansas and Wallace County and were in farming and ranching for many years. We are very interested in seeing new events to help our county and state.

The Rattlesnake Roundup held last September was an interesting and educational event in Sharon Springs, as well as a financial success. There were approximately two thousand in attendance, coming from Kansas and seven other states. Twenty vendors from several different areas set up with foods and crafts which were well received by the crowd. All these things had a definite impact of great economic value to Wallace County and Kansas.

We would like to see this event continue with some changes as proposed in this Bill. We feel this was following through on the Kansas advertised saying of "SELL KANSAS".

Thank you for your time.

Meg and Paul Walker
Box 357
Sharon Springs, KS 67758

Garden in Rapid City, South Dakota. Since that time, they have gone out of business, partly because it's extremely difficult to keep that many snakes alive for the public to view.

There are five snake hunts in the State of Oklahoma, all of which I have attended. These hunts in Oklahoma generate from a quarter million to over a million dollars each, annually. In Sweetwater, Texas, the income each year is between one and a half to two millions dollars, and they have thousands of snakes.

We hunt the land around Waynoka and only around Waynoka. We've been accused of hunting elsewhere, which is not true. We estimate that only about two percent of the snakes habitat is actually ever hunted. In our part of the country, the object of our hunts is the Western Diamondback, we do have Prairies in the top part of the State.

Personally, I don't catch or keep the small rattlesnakes. We used to have a "smallest rattlesnake caught" contest, we've since dismissed that because it's too hard for handlers to handle them and their venom is just as dangerous as the larger snake's venom. When other hunters bring them in, I put them aside until after the hunt, then I take them out and release them back into the wild in a designated area that I picked on my father-in-law's property.

In Waynoka, we have a lot of researchers come into our area, Dr Fitch, Kansas University has been to our hunt and done a lot of research. We do have people that even come in for the gall bladders. I have no idea what the gentleman does with them,

but it does benefit us financially. We have alot of college students come because of the research possibilities. We have a mass area for them to do this and we give them more than enough material to conduct their research.

To the people of Sharon Springs, this event could be a very big boost to them. I ask that you give this Bill your favorable consideration.

-end-

People that were bitten by Rattlesnakes
in Wallace County. "Factual" (13)

Bob Waugh - Wecker

Judy Ekerson - "

Chuck Larson. "

~~Mr~~ Loid Kocher "

Mrs Tom Hays

Kath Sparlock

George Herl

Mr. Kuchoski

Le Roy Hendrick

Mrs Fred Fulton (Francis Mother)

Norman Turner ✓

Janner Poe

M K White

None died from from the bite.

1-30

HOUSE ENERGY & NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Senate Bill No. 137

ADDENDUM

TESTIMONIES

March 15, 1993

House of Representative Committee Hearing - March 15, 1993

Statement in favor of SB #137

I am co-chairperson of the Sharon Springs Rattlesnake Roundup. The roundup idea was conceived about three years ago because of the economic stress of the community. Due to our location off of the interstate highway and no major tourist attraction, we searched for a resources within the area which could bring outside dollars into the community. As you know, we continue to be an economically stressed area. According to the Wichita newspaper of Monday, Feb. 8, 1993, "Wallace county is one of five Kansas counties with 20% of the residents having income below the federal poverty level of \$12,675 per year." Income gained from an event of this type would be used for community improvements not otherwise possible. We fee that in time the businesses will develop sales ideas to gain individual profit from visiting tourism, but we must be able to grow for this to happen and to grow we must have additional enticements for hunters.

Upon combining the interests for economic development, sporting enthusiasts, and tourism development we undertook our first rattlesnake roundup. It was during the planning and execution of our first event that its apparent impact and effect through educational and conservation measures became evident. Many conservation and educational suggestions offered by Dr. Henry Fitch and his assistants have been accepted and put into place. Dr. Fitch and other herpetologists have been invited to continue their research and to provide other lectures and additional educational material.

-more-

1-38

We feel that our event was highly successful with "no problems of violence or anit-hunting activity reported" as written in the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks report of October 20, 1992. The herpetologists attending were also supportive of our efforts as written in a report to the Kansas Herpetological Society, "We were impressed both by the responsibility with which the festival was organized and by the open-mindedness of many of the residents of Sharon Springs. The people of Wallace county are farmers and ranchers who live close to the land and who understand much more about it than some people credit them with."

The first Rattlesnake Roundup had an estimated 2000 visitors for two days spending money in cafes, motels, gas stations and other Sharon Springs businesses, and brought over \$13,000 new dollars into our town for the Rattlesnake committee alone. We had \$4,000 profit with \$2,000 being left in our account for this year and \$1,000 given to each Pride and Jaycees, the sponsoring organizations. This money will be put back into the community. Of our \$9,000 in expenses, \$7,500 was spent in businesses in Wallace county.

By making the proposed changes, we could attract more participants. The license procedure for both Kansas residents and non-resident would be simplified. At the present time the cost of the non-resident license is \$60.50 while only five snakes are allowed to be caught and still they cannot be sold. This is not a good return on their investment, and these changes would make it more feasible for the hunter and an additional income for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks as well. Both Dr.

Fitch and George Pisani, noted K.U. herpetologists, indicate in their report that "the disassembled parts, skin, head, rattles, gall bladder and meat are all salable, retailing for a combined total usually more than \$35." That generates a substantial income in Oklahoma and Texas but is illegal in Kansas. Dressed snake meat will sell for about \$10 per pound in Oklahoma. Hunters in Kansas are missing out on this product. At our Rattlesnake Roundup we gave away the snake meat, sold snake novelties from other states, and the Department of Wildlife and Parks forced us to destroy the snake heads and return the skins to the hunters. Most hunters did not have the experience or the desire to tan and preserve the skins properly, but they were not allowed to sell them to a taxidermist. Most, I believe, were wasted.

As I understand the history, the law dealing with commercialization of reptiles and amphibians was revoked in 1989 to protect the Kansas box turtle from pet stores. It was not intended as a protector or regulator of the prairie rattlesnake.

The question is how can we improve the Kansas Rattlesnake Roundup? We recommend that you approve Senate Bill #137 and enable Kansas rattlesnake hunting to become a conservation tool, a profit to the community/state, and inviting for non-residents as well.

Judie Withers

H.C. 1 Box 485

Sharon Springs, KS 67758

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1-

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE HEARING

Statement in favor of SENATE BILL No. 137:

This bill will allow people in the western counties of Kansas to utilize one of their regenerating resources, the Prairie Rattlesnake, for their economic benefit and as one area in our state prospers so does the whole state.

With the commercialization of this regenerating resource conservation, education, and management will follow.

It has been proven over and over, that until man considers something in Nature a USEFUL RESOURCE, he will not practice conservation and good management. At this point the ranchers, farmers, and most people in that area just kill rattlesnakes because of the danger they represent in their work and damage to livestock. Many farmer and ranches will also destroy the dens when they find them. To quote Joseph T. Collins, from his book AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN KANSAS, "Unlike the timber rattlesnake, this species (the prairie rattlesnake) is quite aggressive and has a nasty disposition..... and should be recognized as the most dangerous venomous snake in Kansas." Since our first roundup, many ranchers and farmers are changing their attitude. They will let the hunters hunt the snakes instead of just killing them and leaving them to rot in the fields. Snake hunters will not destroy the dens or disturb the surrounding habitat because they want to hunt

them in the future. It is also to the hunters advantage not to take the small immature snakes.

This bill will make provisions for a more accurate count of the snakes caught. This could become a very useful tool for the conservation and management of our Prairie Rattlesnake.

This bill will generate more income for our area and our state. To quote from the statement provided by Marciea Weaver, assistant director for Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, "Sharon Springs stages a professional Rattlesnake Roundup and certainly warrants favorable recognition from the State of Kansas and Kansas Wildlife and Parks. Sherman County realized a marked increase during the First Roundup, our motels, services, retail and food businesses all reported increased sales. This indicates the Rattlesnake Roundup is a marketable Tourist Attraction for Kansas." end of quote. The special hunting permits, this bill includes, will provide more income to the state by attracting many additional out of state people to our state and our western counties.

These are some of the few reasons I am urging you to support
SENATE BILL No. 137

by Sarah F. Walker
314 Ericson
Sharon Springs, Ks 67758

1-42

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Jerry K. VanAllen of 5500 SW 25th Street in Topeka, KS. I farmed three and a half sections of irrigated land in the South East corner of Wallace County for thirteen years, from 1972 to 1986 give or take a few months. My father bought the land in the early 60's and it was almost all pasture at that time. He broke it out and developed it over the years. Almost all surrounding land was pasture, so there were a lot of rattlesnakes. Especially in the early days, when we were just beginning to break out the land. There are still to many in the surrounding pastures.

These rattlesnakes make dins in the pastures surrounding our irrigated land because they have easy access to water. I had one irrigation line that hired help refused to change because of the rattlesnakes. I was bitten once changing water there, and had many near misses. My left elbow still fills stiff and as if it was full of arthritis. Over the years, I would say that I killed a rattlesnake per month on our farm. I wouldn't say that this would constitute a shortage, or that they are endangered. When ever we would find a din, we would do everything within our power to destroy it.

I heard one herpetologist say that when a rattlesnake rattles, that we are causing it stress. I can't begin to tell you the stress that we as workers of the land feel when we hear that sound. We work everyday of our lives in constant fear of again being bitten.

Even though I no longer farm, I can tell you first hand that I approve of a rattlesnake roundup in our county. If the state can make this nuisance a money making commodity, I am all in favor of it. Especially in Wallace County. However, I strongly oppose releasing these rattlesnakes back into their natural habitat. I would say that no land owner could find all neighbors surrounding his land that would agree to let rattlesnake released on connecting property. I suggest that this option not even be considered.

For years I would kill rattlesnakes and leave the carcass for hawks and other animals of prey to eat. I think that teaching people how to prepare snake meat, and commercially recycle the hide is a good idea. It would be nice to see something good and productive come of a creature who has caused so much stress and fear over the years.

Very Sincerely,

Jerry K. VanAllen
Asst. Executive Director
Kansas Masonic Foundation

STATE OF KANSAS



Joan Finney
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & PARKS

Theodore D. Ensley
Secretary

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

900 SW Jackson St., Suite 502 / Topeka, Kansas 66612 - 1233
(913) 296-2281 / FAX (913) 296-6953

S.B. 137

Testimony Presented To: House Energy and Natural Resources Comm.
Provided By: Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
March 15, 1993

S.B. 137 establishes a special permit to commercially harvest prairie rattlesnakes and provides for a fee to be established by regulation as specified under K.S.A. 32-988. The maximum fee for a permit to a person with a valid hunting license or exempt from such license is \$5. The maximum fee for a person without a hunting license is \$20. The Department is provided with authority to administer the commercial harvest by rule and regulation.

The Department opposed S.B. 137 in the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee because the bill in original form provided for the commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes, but did not provide the Department with any management authority. The bill was amended to provide necessary authority to manage that resource, thereby removing our objections to the bill.

S.B. 137 in its present form will allow for commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes and provides the ability for this Department to manage that harvest.

House E & NR
Attachment 2
3/15/93



SIERRA CLUB

Kansas Chapter

Testimony of William Craven

Kansas Sierra Club

S.B. 137

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

March 15, 1993

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for providing an opportunity for the Kansas Sierra Club to oppose this bill.

Our opposition is based on the fact that proponents of this bill seem to want to link the slaughter of rattlesnakes with economic development, and we find that linkage to be a very sad comment. Just because they do it in Oklahoma and Texas is not sufficient reason to import this slaughter into Kansas.

As you will undoubtedly hear from other conferees, there is very little data about how many prairie rattlesnakes there are in Kansas or how this so-called harvest will affect the population of these snakes. We know little about how to harvest rattlesnakes while at the same time having the population remain sustainable.

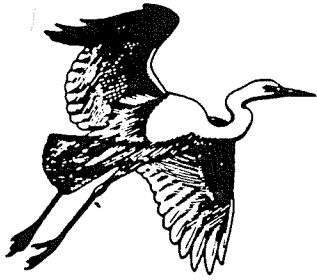
The most important consideration is that from an ecological standpoint, rattlesnakes serve an important function in nature. You don't need to be a rattlesnake scientist to know that these snakes are very effective in controlling rodents. This proposed slaughter of rattlesnakes will, to some extent, unbalance the system, and there will be repercussions.

This bill is really nothing more than an excuse to have an extended tailgate party disguised as economic development. Buy a lot of beer, stay in a local motel, and go get some rattlesnakes. Is that what economic development means to you?

As Joe Collins said in his testimony to the Senate Energy Committee, "if we do not curb the killing of defenseless wildlife, the High Plains will become as tame (and as boring) as a mowed front lawn."

I ask you to consider these remarks as this bill is deliberated, and I hope you will defeat this proposal.

House ER NR
Attachment 3
3/15/93



Kansas Audubon Council

March 15, 1993

Testimony on SB 137

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

I am Joyce Wolf, legislative liaison, for the Kansas Audubon Council. I want to thank you Chairman Holmes for this opportunity to appear before the committee to share the Council's concerns with SB 137.

There are several items that were not addressed in the original version of the bill and still pose questions for our organization:

1) Will there be age limitations on who will be eligible to purchase a nonfirearm permit? Even though death from a venomous snake bite is extremely rare in Kansas, we are concerned that children could be at particular risk if permitted to participate in a rattlesnake roundup without adequate adult supervision or education about identification and the habits of the animals.

2) Several biologists that I have spoken with have all expressed concerns for the method of taking that will be permitted. All have consistently expressed great misgivings about gassing as a means of taking the snakes from their burrows. We realize that "method of take" will be established by rule and regulation; however, does the department have the necessary personnel to adequately enforce these provisions? Has the department prepared a fiscal note on this bill? What percentage of the department's costs will be offset by the income from license sales? In comparison to other commercial permits, these do not seem consistent.

Furthermore, we are concerned that with little field data to affirm or deny the sustainability of the population of prairie rattlesnakes to the pressure that will be applied to their numbers, we are suddenly moving a nongame species to a category of a species that can be taken for commercial purposes -- and taken without a valid hunting license thereby bypassing the requirement of needing hunter safety education classes.

3) We are also aware that the season of the roundup will also be established by rule and regulations. Again, we want to repeat our concerns that nontargeted species, like nesting Burrowing Owls, could be severely impacted if the roundup is scheduled at a time that is convenient to the community of Sharon Springs and not based on sound biological and ecological data.

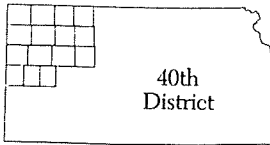
We understand the political pressures that the department is under. We sincerely hope we will not have to be back here next year asking that the authorization of these permits be rescinded because they were not handled with professionalism nor based on sound biological principles. We appreciate this opportunity to share these comments with the committee.

House E & NR
Attachment 4
3/15/93

KANSAS SENATE



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MEMORANDUM

TO: House Energy & Natural Resources Committee
FROM: Senator Sheila Frahm
DATE: March 15, 1993
RE: SB 137

Chairman Holmes and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to bring SB 137 to your attention. This bill was requested by citizens of Wallace County who are committed to the future and to the quality of life in their community.

This past fall Wallace County hosted their first annual Rattlesnake Hunt. As a result of this successful event, and with expectation for a second and many future events, they are requesting your consideration of several proposals which will assist with their project. This event has a potential of becoming economic development for the entire community. In a recent newspaper article, I noticed that Wallace ranked fifth among counties with the highest proportion of residents below the national poverty level. These citizens want to do all they can to assure their future and the future for their children and grandchildren.

Just for your background information, Wallace County, which compromises 914.1 square miles, has a population of 1821. That is just under two people per square mile. Though a specific count is difficult, there are undoubtedly more rattlesnakes than people in Wallace County.

Your favorable attention to this local concern is appreciated.

House EE NR
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