



To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Rep. Ken Rahjes, Chair

From: Kurt Ratzlaff, Policy and Legislation Chair, Kansas Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Date: January 22nd, 2024

RE: HB 2541 – Establishing a state conservation fund

Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2541. Backcountry Hunters and Anglers seeks to ensure our outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting through education and hard work on behalf of our public lands, waters and wildlife. We are members of the Kansans for Conservation coalition which has led the collaborative drafting process of HB 2541.

Conservation is the proper management of our natural resources and there are few investments more critical to the quality of life in Kansas. Our economic success, public health, and future generations are dependent upon us maintaining and improving these resources. Currently, the state is failing to provide the proper funding for this work and is subsequently losing out on federal or private matching dollars to the 35 states that have already established dedicated conservation funding, including all four of our neighbors.

Kansas BHA has established itself as an organization that works very hard to make the public wildlife, lands, and outdoor recreation opportunities in Kansas the best that they can be. The sweat equity that we pour into multiple service projects annually can only accomplish so much. The funding provided by this bill will amplify recreational opportunities in Kansas to a level competitive with our neighboring states. Additionally, the economic value of the funding in this bill will be greatly amplified with matching funds from federal and private sources. This bill provides a rare opportunity to vote for something that will greatly benefit Kansans.

As outlined above and by our fellow coalition members, the establishment of state conservation funding benefits all Kansans, allows for the proper stewardship of the resources bestowed upon us, and enables the state to be competitive for match opportunities. Therefore, we ask you to support HB 2541.

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