



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

From: Tyler Rafter, Kansas State Coordinator, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever

Date: February 6th, 2025

RE: HB 2063 – Establishing a state conservation fund

Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2063. Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever are members of the Kansans for Conservation coalition which has collaborated in the drafting process of HB 2063.

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever are the nation's leading volunteer, membership-based upland conservation group. Our community of more than 482,000 supporters are a diverse group of hunters, farmers, ranchers, landowners, conservation enthusiasts, and wildlife officials. The common thread is all want to make a difference for wildlife by conserving or creating habitat. Since 1987 when the first chapter was started in Kansas, we have expanded to 44 locally led chapters, nearly 6,700 organizational members, and 40 full-time employees who have a rich history of meaningful wildlife habitat creation and enhancement.

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 does not provide dedicated 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.

Dedicated sustainable funding can have tremendous long-term benefits for Kansas' rich history of upland hunting and quality grassland habitat benefitting farmers and ranchers, water quality, wildlife, hunters, and the state's associated outdoor recreation and agricultural economies.

HB 2063 would build on our organization's nearly 500,000 acres of habitat accomplishments and more than \$10,000,000 spent on the wildlife and people of Kansas—and in a way we can all be proud of without creating a new tax obligation for Kansans or increase state debt.

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 2063.

Tyler Rafter
Kansas State Coordinator, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever
