

Members of the Committee –

My name is Mitchell Moorehead, and I am a life-long resident and outdoorsman of the state of Kansas. I am writing to you today as a proponent to HB 2268 and to express my strongest desire that the bill be passed as currently written in the Kansas State House of Representatives. This bill puts residents of the state first in a multitude of ways, all which will not only directly benefit Kansas hunters, but will also better protect the resource we as hunters care so much about.

To begin, I would like to address the problem at hand; Non-residents are running residents out of public land areas for dedicated waterfowl hunting as well as bringing along issues from both conservation and ethical perspectives. It is not an uncommon sight to arrive at any waterfowl hunting area across the state and see countless license plates from all over the United States. Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, you name it, they're here. To a non-hunter, this would appear as a non-issue. To a Kansan hunter who has seen this over-running of public lands get worse and worse year after year, it is incredibly frustrating and sad to watch our amazing public lands become less accessible to those who reside in the state. To elaborate, the accessibility I am referring to is the ability of myself and fellow residents to have a place to hunt in a safe and ethical manner. It has already been discussed in the capital that Kansas is among one of the least-publicly accessible states to hunt in the country, with public acreage amounting to less than 1% of the state's total area, not to mention, not all this land is dedicated to the pursuit of waterfowl. We cannot continue to absorb the over-running of out-of-state hunters if we expect to have any sort of sustainable public land for future generations to enjoy. The fact that residents should even be concerned about the possibility of being able to hunt their own state is rather disappointing.

Limited land availability aside, the natural resources are also bearing the brunt of this ridiculous pressure. As time has gone on and Kansas has become more and more overrun by non-resident waterfowl hunters, those who have hunted the state for any duration of time has noticed distinct changes in migratory waterfowl behavior that directly affect the ability of Kansas residents to have successful harvests in the field. Having hunters seven days a week squeezed into small areas intended to harbor wildlife and give them a place to utilize for food sources and rest while on their thousand-mile migration is only doing damage to the species. Enacting this restriction on out-of-state hunting will directly reduce the pressure on these lands and in turn allow migratory birds to better use the areas for their immediate needs.

I have also been witnessed to the ridiculous amount of legal and ethical concerns brought on commonly by groups of out-of-state hunters. I have observed out-of-state hunters under the influence of drugs and alcohol while hunting and operating firearms. I have picked up piles of trash left behind by groups confirmed to be from out-of-state by game wardens who watched me do so. I have watched out-of-state hunters break rules pertaining to where motorized boats can and cannot be used on public ground, one instance where both me and my girlfriend were

almost struck by a moving boat while hunting, only to see a Missouri registration on the hull of the boat as they turned away only to set up within 100 yards of us, and shoot directly at us the duration of the day. It is examples such as these why I feel so passionately about the passing of this bill. If these experiences could be curbed in any way whatsoever, not doing so is a direct disservice to residents of the state as it is clear to us our lands and regulations are anything but respected by our visitors who use them.

In conclusion, I would like to say that action on this issue is long overdue. Members of the Kansas State Senate have passed this bill (SB 213) with a vote in favor 38-1. The KDWP has also been a proponent of this action and has worked with its members as well as members of the public on this proposed change in regulation. Out-of-staters are running Kansas hunters out of their own state and ruining our resources. With the track we are on, they will soon outnumber residents. Kansas needs to act fast to ensure resident hunters can better enjoy the limited public hunting opportunities in their home state as well as curb the negative impact to the health of public lands and our natural resources.

Please do the right thing and put Kansas and its residents first.

Respectfully,

Mitchell Moorehead