

3/14/2025

Chairman and Committee members,

We rise in opposition to HB2268. Since 2019 a group of 4 friends and Myself have come to Kansas for one week each year to hunt waterfowl. This opportunity is greatly appreciated and valued. I will not go into great detail however I want to mention that the annual trip has been incredibly valuable in relationship building and helped us through some hard times. It is a trip that we cherish and look forward to. Over that time we have built friends in the communities we hunt and love supporting their small businesses. Rough figures we bring a few thousand dollars each year to the small town locally economy where we stay.

We are from Ohio and hunt public land ourselves for many different species. With Whitetail being the main big game animal of the state we are also aware of the impact nonresident hunters can have on public lands. That being said, I do not believe it is the correct answer for Ohio or any state to limit nonresident opportunities but rather focus on creating additional opportunities via additional fees. Once something is gone, traditionally it is never returned and I would hate to see that happen with hunting rights and access in any way. I do not pretend to have all the answers but am confident that the simple answer of restriction is not in the best interest of the state or hunters (Resident or Non Resident).

For those supporting nonresident restrictions I would ask the question “Have you went on vacation in the last 10 years to the beach, hunting in another state or visited the mountains?” How would your life be impacted if those options were removed or restricted. While I believe there are ways to mitigate the pressure on public lands (I will leave those for another letter) I truly believe there should be some concrete and steadfast data over a significant period of time (5-10 years) that shows resident waterfowl decline and/or significant pressure on the resource and that it is directly related to nonresident hunters overpopulating the area. Reading through past meeting notes I noticed a significant amount of “We think” or “seems like” verbiage.

I often hear hunters in our state make comments such as “ there just ain’t deer like their used to be” Yet the data suggests different. There are more deer in Ohio and opportunities that ever though they may look different that in years past. We have hunted Kansas the past 5 seasons and 2 common things we always notice are ,

1. How well kept the public lands are
2. Lack of Waterfowl hunting pressure in comparison to other states

Focusing on #2...Our group has hunted a large reservoir in the state for 5 consecutive days and only encountered a max of 3 other hunters during that trip. In Ohio, that same reservoir would have upwards of 10-15 boats each day. I don't say this to make light of increased hunting pressure but it is subjective to what someone calls "pressure". I would ask that a study be done to help determine what "pressure" is and have concrete facts over feeling.

Again we stand in opposition to HB2268 and ask you not to pass this destructive legislation. To close, thanks for the opportunities you have created for our group and we hope to be able to continue visiting the state in the future!

Tom Markley