

# KANSAS OUTDOOR HERITAGE ALLIANCE

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

**From: Kurt Ratzlaff on behalf of Kansas Outdoor Heritage Alliance**

**RE: HB 2547 Upland Bird Stamp**

**Date: February 3, 2026**

Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposing testimony on HB2547.

The Kansas Outdoor Heritage Alliance (KOHA) recently came together to provide the Kansas legislature with the voice of Kansas hunters, anglers, trappers and houndsmen. We represent the interests of the everyday sportsmen and women out there walking in a field behind a bird dog, the angler sitting on the bank or in a small boat trying to catch a few fish to fry up, the trapper checking the line every day and the houndsmen listening to hear a dog sound off on a racoon and other related activities. KOHA represents those of us who are not looking to make money off the outdoors, but do invest our passion, time, money, and effort. We are the backbone of the financial support of the outdoors and its conservation.

The following members of the Kansas Outdoor Heritage Alliance oppose HB 2547:

Kansas Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Kansas Bowhunters Association

Kansas Federation of Houndsmen

Kansas Fur Harvesters Association

Kansas Hunters For Access

Kansas Walleye Association

The groups offering this testimony completely share the goals set forth in HB 2547. Clearly and without a doubt, pheasant populations on our public lands have plummeted since the heyday of pheasant hunting in Kansas. Our Kansas hunting community wants to change that, without question. A good, viable pheasant population on public hunting grounds is also a huge economic boost to the entire area. No question. It is also true that most hunters begin, and continue to engage in, their hunting careers on public lands. Very few can pay the \$500/day charged by commercial upland hunting facilities.

Unfortunately, it is a fact that releasing pen-raised pheasants does absolutely nothing to restore gamebird populations. Nothing. Survival rates of today's genetically different pen-raised pheasants are, for all practical purposes, zero. Raising funds to purchase and release game birds will have no effect on the population of public lands gamebirds for any measurable time at all.

As a practical matter, the proposed cost of this stamp for a Kansas resident (\$15) would not cover the purchase of one pen-raised pheasant. And the daily limit currently is four. Financially, this just does not make sense.

Enacting a similarly priced upland bird stamp, as a required purchase of all upland bird hunters in the state, with those benefits directed to habitat projects on public lands specifically for the purposes of restoring pheasant populations, would have a tremendous effect on gamebird population numbers. Pheasants Forever recently started a program called P.A.T.H. (Public Access To Habitat) which is an example of a partial solution to the problem sought to be addressed by HB 2547.

The greatest problem faced by hunters today, shown consistently in one survey after another, is lack of access. That means a lack of places to go to hunt. We understand the frustration of the sponsor of this bill and will be happy to work together to help this situation. Unfortunately, the supervising of this proposed fund, purchase of birds and their release, and all the associated duties that go along with that process, would greatly stretch the few resources of Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks much further, with little to no return on investment.

The above members of the Kansas Outdoor Heritage Alliance respectfully urge the members of this Committee to amend HB 2547 to align with the statements contained herein or oppose the passage of the bill as currently written.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kurt Ratzlaff

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