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**House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Written Proponent Testimony on House Bill 2547
Kris W. Kobach, Kansas Attorney General
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Chairman Rahjes and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 2547. As committee members may be aware, I am a lifelong upland game bird hunter with a deep interest in this subject. This important bill establishes a focused and transparent framework to support upland game bird restoration in Kansas while preserving long-standing licensing structures and respecting private land rights.

HB 2547 is narrowly tailored, user-funded, and conservation-focused. It creates a dedicated upland game bird restoration program and fund, ensures that revenues generated for this purpose are used exclusively for upland game bird procurement and release, and expands hunting opportunities, particularly for youth, without imposing unnecessary burdens on hunters or landowners.

Sections 1 through 4 of HB 2547 establish the Upland Game Bird Restoration Act, which introduces several new policy components:

- A requirement that most hunters obtain a valid upland game bird stamp prior to taking upland game birds in Kansas, with important exemptions;
- Creation of a dedicated upland game bird restoration fee fund that cannot revert to the state general fund;
- Establishment of a formal upland game bird restoration program administered by the Department of Wildlife and Parks; and
- Creation of a 10-day youth upland game bird hunting season immediately preceding the regular season.

Section 5 adds the upland game bird stamp to that existing fee schedule, setting maximum fees of \$15 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents.

One of the central strengths of HB 2547 is the creation of a dedicated upland game bird restoration fee fund. All revenues generated from the upland game bird stamp are deposited directly into this fund and may be used only for the procurement and release of upland game birds in Kansas.

The bill expressly prevents these funds from being transferred to or reverting to the state general fund. This ensures transparency and accountability and provides confidence to hunters that the fees they pay are directly reinvested into improving upland game bird populations and hunting opportunities.

This user-funded model mirrors other successful conservation funding mechanisms and avoids placing additional demands on general state revenues.

HB 2547 is carefully scoped and includes meaningful exemptions. The upland game bird stamp requirement does not apply to:

- Individuals who are not required to hold a hunting license under existing law;
- Hunters who are hunting only on private land; or
- Lifetime license holders.

These exemptions reflect a clear legislative intent to avoid over-regulation and to respect private property rights, long-standing license arrangements, and existing statutory exemptions.

The bill also establishes a 10-day youth upland game bird season, beginning ten days prior to the regular season. This provision promotes youth participation in hunting and conservation, helps pass along Kansas's outdoor traditions, and encourages responsible mentorship through the adult accompaniment requirement.

By pairing youth engagement with habitat and population restoration efforts, HB 2547 takes a long-term view of conservation and outdoor recreation in Kansas.

Healthy upland game bird populations support more than recreational hunting. They contribute to tourism, rural economic activity, and sustained participation in outdoor recreation. The bill explicitly recognizes these broader benefits by directing the program to reestablish bird populations on public hunting lands and increase tourism revenue associated with upland hunting.

HB 2547 strikes an appropriate balance between conservation, access, and fiscal responsibility. It does not impose new general taxes, does not divert funds from existing programs, and does not expand government authority beyond what is necessary to administer a clearly defined restoration effort. Instead, it creates a transparent, hunter-supported mechanism to improve upland game bird populations and expand opportunities for current and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to recommend favorable consideration of HB 2547.