



Chair Kessler and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate this opportunity to submit **opponent testimony for HB 2279**, which exempts certain rules, including those by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks from legislative ratification for proposed rules with significant economic impacts. We hold the following position on HB 2279:

1. HB 2279 erodes legislative oversight.
2. HB 2279 creates the potential for unchecked regulatory actions.
3. HB 2279 creates a precedent for future exemptions.

**HB 2279 erodes legislative oversight.**

The Kansas legislature enacted the REINS Act to restore accountability in the regulatory process. It requires legislative approval for any rule or regulation that costs \$1 million or more in implementation and compliance over five years. This oversight ensures that elected representatives, rather than unelected bureaucrats, have the final say in implementing costly rules. The REINS Act embodies a fundamental principle of democratic governance: the power to create significant laws and regulations rests with the people's representatives.

The Department of Wildlife and Parks is already subject to the same checks and balances as every other state agency under the REINS Act. If its proposed regulations are genuinely in the public interest and cost-effective, they can and should be reviewed and approved by the legislature. If they fail to meet these standards, they should be modified or rejected—just like any other central regulation. There is no compelling reason why this department should be exempt from the same democratic oversight that applies to all others.

**HB 2279 creates the potential for unchecked regulatory actions.**

Without the checks and balances provided by the REINS Act, the Department of Wildlife and Parks could enact regulations that impose considerable compliance costs on businesses, local governments, and individuals, potentially harming their operations and livelihoods.

The Department of Wildlife and Parks oversees important areas such as land use, hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. While these areas are vital, regulations in these fields can have significant economic consequences for small businesses, property owners, and rural communities.

For example, land use or water management regulations could easily exceed the \$1 million threshold, impacting farmers, ranchers, and rural communities that rely on Kansas' natural resources for their livelihoods. Without legislative oversight, these groups may have no recourse when faced with heavy-handed regulations that hurt their businesses or property values.

Legislative oversight is essential to ensure that these regulations strike the right balance between conservation and economic growth.



**HB 2279 creates a precedent for future exemptions.**

One key purpose of the REINS Act is to rein in the administrative state's broad authority. Allowing exemptions like the one proposed in HB 2279 erodes this principle. If one department is exempt today, what stops others from seeking similar treatment tomorrow? HB 2279 sets a dangerous precedent and weakens the protections that Kansans rely on to prevent excessive government overreach.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to pass HB 2279 in its current form.