

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to review **House Bill 2423**. I appreciate the opportunity to share perspective as someone directly involved in both drone operations and Kansas agriculture, even though I am not a constituent of every member on this committee.

I am a federally licensed commercial drone pilot and the owner of an agricultural drone spraying and precision aerial services company based in north central Kansas. My business operates year-round and utilizes multiple drone platforms, including thermal imaging drones, for lawful and beneficial purposes such as crop and field analysis, livestock and pet recovery, precision agriculture services, and aerial imaging.

I am also a lifelong hunter who deeply respects Kansas wildlife. I enjoy hunting, but even more so I value ethical harvest and recovery. One of the most difficult experiences for any hunter is wounding an animal and being unable to recover it. I strongly believe that allowing limited thermal drone use for deer recovery is one of the most humane, ethical solutions available today.

I am passionate about this issue — so much so, that this is the second time I have contacted Kansas legislators. My first outreach was to encourage introduction of legislation allowing drone-assisted deer recovery. I am grateful to see that HB 2423 is now being discussed.

In practice, thermal recovery involves a brief, high-altitude nighttime flight conducted only after a legal shot, focused solely on locating heat signatures consistent with a wounded or deceased animal, without pursuing or influencing wildlife behavior.

I would like to address a couple of concerns that often arise: The first- **harassment** or disturbance of wildlife. Modern recovery drones typically operate at altitudes of up to 400 feet above ground level. At these heights, deer are not disturbed, influenced, or harassed in any meaningful way. In fact, extensive real-world footage from the well-known **YouTube channel “Drone Deer Recovery”** shows that even healthy, uninjured deer are completely unaware of the drone’s presence. The animals do not flee, alter behavior, or show signs of stress. This technology allows for recovery without pursuit, pressure, or physical disturbance. They operate in Ohio, where drone-assisted recovery is legal and has demonstrated responsible, non-disruptive use.

Secondly, the concern often raised that drone recovery could provide **scouting** advantages for future hunts. In practice, recovery flights offer little to no usable scouting value, as they are brief, conducted at night, flown at high altitude, and focused solely on locating a single wounded or deceased animal. Any potential concern can be easily mitigated by restricting use to a defined recovery window after a legal shot, prohibiting pre-harvest flights, or even

prohibiting hunting at a location that was flown until the next legal shooting light. With these safeguards in place, thermal drones function as a recovery tool only — not a scouting or hunting aid.

Allowing thermal drone recovery provides several important benefits that current recovery methods often cannot:

- **Promotes accountability and ethical harvest:** Drone-assisted recovery greatly increases the likelihood of locating wounded or deceased deer, ensuring harvested animals are found and properly tagged rather than lost. This reinforces ethical hunting practices by holding hunters accountable for animals they have already shot, rather than unintentionally allowing unrecovered game to go unreported or wasted.
- **Minimizes repeated disturbance of wounded animals:** Traditional tracking often involves physically following a blood trail, which can repeatedly bump or push a wounded deer farther away. A drone allows the animal to bed down and pass peacefully without continued pressure.
- **Reduces loss of blood trails:** In real-world conditions, blood trails can quickly become faint or disappear entirely due to terrain, vegetation, weather, or the animal continuing to move after being bumped. Thermal imaging can locate an animal even when no visible trail remains.
- **Avoids extended pursuit with dogs:** While tracking dogs can be effective, they can also continue to push wounded deer, increasing stress and prolonging suffering. A drone offers a non-invasive alternative that does not chase or physically pressure the animal.
- **Reduces waste of legally harvested game:** Faster recovery means less spoilage, better meat quality, and less loss of an animal that was legally and ethically harvested.
- **Decreases trespass and property conflicts:** Quickly locating a deer reduces the likelihood of prolonged searches across multiple properties and helps hunters respect landowner boundaries.
- **Improves safety:** Drone recovery reduces the need for hunters to traverse unfamiliar terrain, waterways, or dense cover at night.

I fully support reasonable safeguards, such as limiting drone use strictly to recovery after a legal shot, prohibiting scouting or pre-harvest use, requiring landowner permission, and

requiring licensed operators. These guardrails can ensure the technology is used responsibly and does not erode fair-chase principles.

I would welcome the opportunity to legally offer drone deer recovery services in Kansas and to help set a standard for ethical, professional, and conservation-minded use of this technology.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration of HB 2423. I appreciate the work this committee does on behalf of Kansas hunters, landowners, and wildlife.

Respectfully,

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