

SESSION OF 2024

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 347

As Recommended by Senate Committee on
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Brief*

SB 347 would require the appointments to the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission to be subject to Senate confirmation and prohibit an unconfirmed appointee from exercising any power, duty, or function as a member of the Commission. In addition, the bill would state that Senate confirmation preserves the rights guaranteed by Section 21 of the Bill of Rights of the *Kansas Constitution* regarding the right of the public to hunt, fish, and trap wildlife.

[*Note:* All appointments to the Commission are made by the Governor.]

The bill would be in effect upon publication in the *Kansas Register*.

Background

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at the request of Senator Peck.

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

In the Senate Committee hearing, Senator Steffen and Representative Corbet provided **proponent** testimony on the bill, stating Senate confirmation of the Commission creates

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

checks and balances on the Executive Branch. The conferees also stated the right to hunt, fish, and trap in the state is important, and appointees to the Commission should be thoroughly vetted in order to ensure this right is protected.

The Secretary of Wildlife and Parks provided **opponent** testimony on the bill, stating that under the existing gubernatorial appointment process, vacancies can be filled quickly, which is important, as the Commission's main purpose is to solicit public input during the rules and regulations promulgation process. The Secretary also noted the Commission does not oversee the administrative functions of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP).

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by a representative of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers Kansas.

Neutral testimony was provided by a representative of The Nature Conservancy, who stated that regulatory decisions of the Commission must be informed by science and in pursuit of outcomes that benefit wildlife as a shared resource owned by all Kansans.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, the KDWP states that an appointee could incur travel expenditures to meet with the Senate for confirmation; however, any additional expenses would be absorbed within the agency's existing resources. Legislative Administrative Services states the requirements of the bill would fall within normal operations of the Legislature and could be absorbed within its current budget. Any fiscal effect associated with the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2025 Governor's Budget Report*.

Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission; Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks; Senate confirmation