

**Testimony on SB 330 relating to Amending Fee Limitations  
To  
The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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SB 330 seeks to amend fee limitations for certain department licenses, permits, stamps and other issues. **The Department requested introduction of the bill.** The provisions of the bill would be effective upon publication in the statute book.

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is a set of principles that has guided wildlife management and conservation decisions in the United States and Canada since the late 1800's. Chief among the tenets is the funding model. Wildlife restoration and management is funded by hunters and anglers, directly through license and permit dollars and through excise taxes paid on hunting and fishing equipment. The excise taxes are paid by the manufacturer to the federal government and allocated back to the states based on a formula consisting of the number of license buyers and geographic area covered by the state. This model brought back game species that in the early 1900's were at all-time lows as well as has restored or recovered countless non-game species.

Kansas has 730 distinct wildlife species residing within its borders and 78 are game or fish species that have a season requiring a hunting or fishing license. That translates license revenue from hunters and anglers who pursue 11 percent of the species, funding conservation and management for all 730 species. Of the 2.9 million Kansas residents, less than 19 percent directly fund conservation. It is clear that it is critical that the Department continue to have the ability to increase fees, when necessary, to continue to allow wildlife to thrive and while avoiding conflict with development, farming and ranching, and avoid listing species as threatened or endangered.

The Department of Wildlife and Parks was created by executive order in the late 1980's by then Governor Mike Hayden and further defined by Governor Brownback with the addition of the Tourism Division. Governor Hayden also created the Wildlife and Parks Commission, which is the public interface with the Department. The Commission takes recommendations from the Department as well as conducts public hearings on regulations, to then set fees for hunting and fishing licenses and permits. The agency cannot simply raise fees of its own accord. The records in our office go back to 1989 and in 1994, a hunting license cost \$13.00. In that period of 24 years, the agency finally reached the statutory cap on many of the issuances in statute. License and permit fees were approved in 2016, the first time in 14 years, and no fee increases are currently being considered. However, it is now time to raise those caps for the next 30-40 years.

**The Department appreciates the opportunity to address the Committee and requests favorable passage of the bill.**