



9 February 2024

HB 2671

Dear Members of the House Budget Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources:

On behalf of Safari Club International, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the House Bill 2671. House Bill 2671 would appear to reduce nonresident hunting license fees from the current maximum of \$125 down to \$25 and make the \$25 refundable, along with fees, if the individual does not obtain a hunting permit. Safari Club International opposes the provisions contained in the bill.

One of the basic tenants of the North American Model of Conservation is that hunters have long paid the way for conservation, both resident and nonresident. Preference is given to resident hunters in the form of resource allocation as well as a lower fee structure. Those funds are then matched with a federal allocation based on license sales and geographic area derived from excise taxes on the sales of firearms and ammunition. This century old model has been wildly successful in restoring wildlife across the state of Kansas for all the citizens of the state to enjoy.

The bill before you today would severely disrupt this funding model and the services that the Department provides. A conservative estimate of the cost of implementing the proposed bill would be in the neighborhood of \$7.2 million. Arguably, it could cost considerably more if “tag” in subsection (h) of the bill is interpreted as permit cost and could also allow nonresident bird hunters to seek refunds after hunting because they did not obtain a permit, neither of which are considered in the fiscal impact. As such, if the bill were enacted, the Department, following the statutory policy direction of the Legislature, would have to either reduce services it provides, such as the Walk In Hunting Access program, which puts millions of dollars directly into the pockets of landowners in exchange for hunter access, or increase fees on residents for the benefit of subsidizing nonresidents, neither of which would seem palatable to Kansans.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 2671 and we appreciate the Committee’s consideration in opposing the bill. SCI is dedicated to protecting the freedom to hunt and is always First For Hunters.

Sincerely,

W. Laird Hamberlin
Chief Executive Officer
Safari Club International