



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
KANSAS**

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Senator Virgil Peck, Chair

From: Kurt Ratzlaff, Kansas Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Date: January 24, 2024

Re: SB 347 Requiring senate confirmation of Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Commission appointees

Chairman Peck and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposing testimony to SB347. Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) is known as the sportsmen's voice for our public lands, waters and wildlife. The Kansas Chapter of BHA seeks to ensure our outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting, through education and hard work. We perform numerous service projects every year to improve our publicly owned lands and increase hunting and fishing access and opportunity in any way we can.

The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission is tasked with, for hunting purposes, working within the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The North American Model is the most successful wildlife conservation concept that exists today. As a part of following that Model, the Commission should exist, as much as possible, outside of the legislative branch of government. The Commission has a difficult job and is caught between many competing ideas and opinions. The North American Model requires that the Commission follow sound science to determine the appropriate actions to take regarding our wildlife, even when popular opinion says otherwise.

Several states have a confirmation process similar to the proposal in SB 347. In some instances, that requirement has been abused and used as an attempt to completely dismantle Commissions. By simply refusing to confirm appointees, the current bill gives the senate the ability to completely disband the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission. This would completely abandon a proven, successful method of wildlife conservation and throw open the door to those who would destroy our Kansas outdoor heritage.

The Kansas Commission is currently a well-functioning part of our Kansas government and fulfills its part in the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. There is no clearly apparent reason to add governmental layers when the current system is working as it should.

For these reasons, the Kansas Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers opposes SB 347.

