



To: Honorable Members of the Missouri Conservation Commission

Re: Proposed Regulatory Changes Creating and Requiring the Purchase of a Non-Resident Public Land Deer Hunting Permit

Position: Suggested Alternative

Date: August 14, 2026

Honorable Members of the Missouri Conservation Commission,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I write to recommend an alternative to the proposed non-resident public land deer permit proposal. As written, the proposal effectively and significantly increases costs for non-resident, public land deer hunters for the second time this year, sacrificing opportunities for those of limited means for the sake of lowering hunter competition on Missouri's public lands.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Competition among hunters, particularly in states like Missouri where most lands are held in private ownership, can certainly create challenges in terms of hunter satisfaction and long-term participation in our time-honored outdoor traditions. While we understand the need to address rising competition on public lands, we fear that the proposed requirement related to a \$165 Non-Resident Public Land Deer Hunting Permit would achieve the goal of lowering competition by pricing out those who lack the ability to afford this opportunity. While that may be effective at reducing competition, it actively undermines larger efforts around the country designed to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters of all means, particularly those who rely on hunting as a means of providing meat for their family. For non-resident hunters who live close enough to make traveling to Missouri reasonably affordable, this additional permit and the associated fee risk pushing the total cost beyond the value of opportunity that Missouri's limited public lands are able to provide. This is particularly true given that roughly 50% of public lands in Missouri are located within Mark Twain National Forest, federal lands supported by everyone, not just Missouri residents.

Rather than requiring additional permits and raising prices further, we recommend that MDC continues to explore alternative approaches that could be used to decrease competition without

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disproportionately affecting sportsmen and women of lower socioeconomic means. Specifically, we propose that the Commission create a non-resident lottery system for certain public lands facing the highest degree of competition among hunters. While this would be logistically challenging for MDC staff, doing so would allow prices to remain stable and will avoid decreasing interest in Missouri's hunting opportunities by giving all non-residents a fair chance at a permit. In fact, this reduction in supply, if successfully coupled with increased public land success and satisfaction, could actually increase demand for these opportunities in the future and continue to elevate Missouri as a premier white-tail hunting destination to which many serious hunters from across the country will continue to aspire.

While Missouri's conservation system, and its associated funding model, is unique in its decreased reliance on the American System of Conservation Funding thanks completely to the wildly successful conservation sales tax, we are concerned that the successful reduction in hunter competition caused by a blanket requirement for an additional \$165 permit on top of the now \$360 deer permit that prices out all but the more affluent hunters is a poor precedent to set. While we understand that Missouri remains one of the more friendly states for non-resident sportsmen and women, we look forward to working with the Commission and MDC to find a solution that maintains hunter satisfaction, particularly for public land hunters, without sacrificing opportunities for those of limited means.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kent Keene", with a stylized, flowing script.

Kent Keene

Senior Manager, Midwestern States and Agriculture Policy
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

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