OFFICE OF

No. SB 1142

THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA., May 20, 2016

TIME SIGNED: 11:50 Am

TO THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
AND MEMBERS OF THE OKLAHOMA SENATE
SECOND SESSION OF THE
FIFTY FIFTH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE

ENROLLED SENATE BILL NO. 1142:

This is to advise you, pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 11 of Article VI of the Oklahoma Constitution to approve or object to legislation presented to me, I have VETOED Senate Bill 1142 (Bill).

Feral swine is an invasive species that inflicts significant damage on Oklahoma ranch and farmland, and can hurt or even kill domestic livestock and other wildlife. Although I support the intent of this Bill, which is to make it easier to remove or attempt to remove feral swine, the Bill's real-world application to public property like state parks and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) would create an unreasonable public safety threat and a conservation crisis.

The Bill includes several measures—eliminating the permitting requirement for individuals who want to exclusively shoot feral hogs, authorizing nighttime removal, and allowing the use of certain technology when taking feral swine (motor-driven land conveyances, spotlights, and night-vision equipment)—that, in combination, make public hunting lands an unreasonably unsafe place to be. It is easy to imagine a state hunting ground where individuals want to use the land in different and mutually incompatible ways: for instance, feral swine removal and either turkey hunting or camping. If this Bill were enacted, individuals attempting to take feral swine could mistakenly target turkey hunters in the pre-dawn hours, or a stray bullet could inadvertently strike a camper's tent. Without any requirement to notify park rangers or game wardens, and without a clear administrative process for cordoning off incompatible uses in a logical way, tragedy can and will occur.

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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Similarly, the Bill will likely undercut enforcement efforts to curtail illegal poaching. Any individual who wants to spotlight deer or hunt out-of-season will have a ready excuse if approached by a game warden, at least in the absence of an incriminating carcass. Responsible wildlife management, for today and for tomorrow's hunters, is a constitutional imperative that must not be significantly disadvantaged, even for a well-intentioned purpose.

In conclusion, although I am vetoing Senate Bill 1142 because of its detrimental impacts on public property, I will direct the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation via Executive Order 2016-16 to streamline depredation permits for use on private land. Although trapping feral swine is the most effective means of removal, we must be willing to employ every available method of elimination if we want to eradicate this destructive nuisance. In this manner, Oklahoma will be able to maximize safe and responsible feral swine removal and preserve the core objectives of the Bill, all within the parameters of current, controlling law.

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Mary Fallin

By _____

Date/Time _____