

“Home Rule” is Not For Vermont

Vermont’s municipalities enjoy a great deal of authority within their municipal boundaries. That authority is not unlimited: A Vermont municipality only has the power that the Legislature allows it to have. This concept is known as “Dillon’s Rule”, a cornerstone of municipal law with Vermont being one of 40 states that have this sensible approach to handling certain types of laws.

In Vermont, we have [24 V.S.A. § 2295](#), also known as the Sportsman’s Bill of Rights. This statute limits a municipalities’ authority over hunting, fishing, trapping, firearms and ammunition.

Vermont’s adherence to Dillon’s rule spares municipalities from having to deal with constitutionally-protected activities.

Consider the situation of a hunter who hunts in a different town. As they drive to their hunting area, they may cross many municipal boundaries: Should they have to be aware of each town’s ordinances when they stop to get gas, have a meal, shop or simply pass thru?

We do not want Vermont to have conflicting and confusing local ordinances, that could change yearly, as this would be a problem for law enforcement and citizen compliance.

Dillon’s rules was conceived in America over 140 years ago and it has served Vermont and served it well, because there is a single set of laws over specific activities, and [24 V.S.A. § 2295](#) was specifically written to protect the sporting heritage of Vermont.