

**Module 10: State and Local Government**  
**Topic 1 Content: Relationship Between State and Local Government**

**Introduction**



**Demi:** Thank you for joining us for this episode of WUSG News. On today's program, Glover will be discussing the relationship between Virginia's state government and its numerous local governments.

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**Local Government Corruption**



**Glover Mint:** There was a point in American history when local governments suffered from extensive corruption. Although corruption can and does happen in the government today, during the 1800s, having a corrupt local government was the rule, rather than the exception. John Forrest Dillon was a judge in the Iowa state courts who looked for a way to end the regular abuse of power at the local level. Dillon came up with a theory, which became known as Dillon's Rule, which outlined how state governments should manage their local governments.

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#### Dillon's Rule

## Dillon's Rule

### 3 Types of Local Government Power Under Dillon's Rule

1. Expressed Powers
2. Implied Powers
3. Essential Powers

- Dillon's Rule states that local government derives its power from the state government.
- Under Dillon's Rule, if there is doubt that a local government has a power, by default it does not have it.
- Most states used Dillon's rule to reform local governments.
- Virginia continues to enforce it.
- Local governments can only act with the approval of the General Assembly.



**Glover Mint:** Dillon's Rule states that a local government derives all of its power from the state government. What this means is that local governments have three types of power:

- expressed powers, which are specifically given in writing by the state government;
- implied powers, which are not specifically stated in writing, but understood to be a part of the expressed powers; and
- powers that are essential to the implementation of an expressed power.


Under Dillon's Rule, if there is any doubt as to whether a local government possesses a certain power, by default the local government does not have that power. Most states used Dillon's Rule to help reform their local governments. Some of these states have relaxed Dillon's Rule over time, but Virginia government still enforces Dillon's Rule. County, city, and town governments are only authorized to take actions that are approved by the General Assembly.

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**Regional Authorities**

## Regional Authorities

**A board is appointed by circuit court judges to manage the regional authority, with members from each participating county, city, and town.**



**Glover Mint:** Counties, cities, and towns are responsible for implementing the state government's public policies. By strictly adhering to Dillon's Rule, Virginia's state government ensures that its laws and programs are carried out appropriately at the local level. Virginia state government also helps ensure its policies are carried out through the use of regional authorities. Regional authorities are created by the General Assembly for special functions that involve multiple counties, cities, and towns. Mass transportation, the use of land, water supply systems, and waste-disposal are all issues that cross the boundaries of local governments. These regional authorities may also manage regional facilities like hospitals, parks, public universities, and correctional centers. Typically, a board is appointed by circuit court judges to manage the regional authority, with members from each of the participating counties, cities, and towns involved. These boards establish policy, oversee operations, and collaborate with state and local government officials.

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**Ending of Episode**



**Demi Tracy:** I want to thank you all for joining me and Glover for this episode of WUSG News. We hope you have a wonderful day.