



Vermont State Rifle & Pistol Association

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VSRPA Position on H.89 of the 2011-2012 Legislative Session

The recent return of the Vermont Legislature has resulted in the re-introduction of H.89, a bill that requires serious opposition by the Vermont shooting and hunting community.

[H.89](#), named as "An Act Relating to Banning the Hunting of Black Bear with Dogs" singles out one long-established hunting tradition as being evil.

The bill has the following problems:

- Every person who uses a dog to hunt should be able to anticipate what the next logical step to H.89 would be if this seriously flawed legislation is enacted into law. It is clearly foreseeable that the same line of reasoning that suggests that Hunting Bear with Dogs is evil will have no difficulty in leaping to the conclusion that hunting any other game species with dogs is also evil, including such things as rabbit hunting and bird hunting.
- Any individual who is active with the training of dogs to hunt bear could no longer pursue this aspect of their livelihood, not even to train dogs for use in bear hunting in other states or other countries.
- As many farmers in this state will tell you, Black Bears produce a prodigious amount of damage to crops such as corn. A single black bear can devastate large swaths of corn in a single evening, causing a direct loss of income to a profession already severely challenged to be profitable.

When a Black Bear is hunted with dogs, the dogs do not kill the bear, they "badger" the bear until the bear is "treed". Even when treed, the bear is not always killed or even harmed as a result. This is because a bear hunter can only take one bear a season, and if the treed bear is a cub or is small, the hunter may simply take his dogs and leave the bear alone to save his quota for another larger bear. In numerous cases where a bear is not shot as a result of being treed by Bear Hounds – it has been seen that these bears have a noted reluctance to return to the area where they were chased from – leaving the crops alone.

- Bears are usually a deep woods animal, and in the past years the bear population in Vermont is rising. Beyond this, and because this deep woods habitat is forever being encroached upon by humans who seek quiet country living, bear interactions with humans are also increasing. When the bear population in a certain area needs to be thinned, the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife will often turn to a bear hunter to resolve the problem, and the best way to hunt bear is with dogs.
- This Bill was brought forward by Donahue (R – Northfield) and Grad (D – Moretown). Both have indicated that they do not support this bill, and both indicate that they moved this bill forward because they were requested to: *By Only One Constituent*. While the concept of submitting bills "By Request" allows a single person a voice in the legislature, it is at best irresponsible for a Representative to submit a bill that they themselves do not support, and doing so does not absolve them from accountability.

In summary, this legislation appears to have no other purpose than to remove a long-standing tradition for no other reason than it has no appeal to some individuals. This type of thought process can just as easily be used

To Voice your opposition to this bill, call the Sergeant of Arms at (800) 322-5616.
Ask to leave a message for Chair Deen and Speaker Smith: "**NO to H.89**".

with the hunting of other game species with dogs, as it can be used against hunting or fishing, and this bill must be opposed.

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