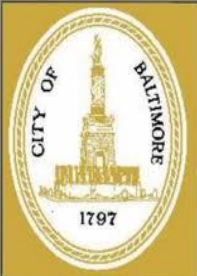


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Richard J. Luna, Interim Director <i>RJL</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE <i>MEMO</i>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 23-0161R		

October 17, 2023

TO:

Rules and Legislative Oversight Committee

I am herein reporting on City Council Resolution 23-0161R introduced by Council Members Conway, Glover, Torrence, Middleton, Ramos, Burnett, and Bullock.

The purpose of the Resolution is to invite the Director of the Office of Sustainability, the Interim Director of the Department of Public Works, and the Zero Waste Manager of the Department of Public Works to discuss the littering and dumping problem in Baltimore City and explore the creation of an anti-littering campaign or effort to encourage Baltimore's residents and visitors to be more mindful of how they dispose of their waste.

The Department of Public Works is tasked with curbside collection of residential mixed refuse and recyclables, keeping public ways clean, and managing the safe disposal of mixed refuse and other trash that cannot be recycled or repurposed. The Bureau of Solid Waste provides the following: curbside collection of mixed refuse and recyclables; mechanical street sweeping; street and alley cleaning; corner cans for the collection of litter; marine operations unit to clean waterways; cleaning and mowing of City-owned vacant lots, cleaning and boarding of City-owned properties and private nuisance vacant properties; and the opportunity for residents to schedule bulk items collection. The Bureau also manages the Quarantine Road Landfill, the Northwest Transfer Station, and five free residential drop off locations.

In addition to these services, the Bureau offers other opportunities to keep the city clean: Community Pitch-In Event provides up to four (4) roll off containers per year per community organization to encourage neighbors collectively clean their neighborhoods (requested via 311); the Volunteer Clean-Up Event service request available for any resident, business or organization to register their clean up event and request bag collection from the City; and the Mayor's Spring and Fall Cleanups to galvanize cleaning efforts all around the city. The Department also collaborates with and supports efforts such as the Environmental Control Board's BMORE Beautiful program, the Trash Wheel, and the joint effort with Office of Sustainability for developing the beginnings of food waste recovery.

Legislative initiatives banning the use of certain plastic bags, clarifying the misuse of corner cans as illegal dumping, requiring certain permit holders to include a refuse disposal plan and proof of disposal, and increasing the fines for illegal dumping are practical approaches to discourage activities that result in littering and illegal dumping. The challenge that is presented is the difficulty in enforcing some of these common sense laws.

Education and outreach are always important components of the Department's work. Its Residential Advisory Council is a volunteer committee that provides direct input and ideas regarding the Department's services and collaborates with leadership on solutions to long standing issues involving waste and blight. The recently established B'More LOVE volunteer network and the Eco-Warriors of the Future School Campaign are building neighborhood level support and activism for clean and safe communities. The Department's liaisons continue to be the conduit for Department initiatives and information directly to and with community associations and leadership. In addition to the venerable DPW Calendar, the Public Works website includes descriptions of programs and upcoming events, and useful information such as the Recycle Right site that identifies what can and cannot be recycled. Trash Talk Tuesdays and the "Beyond Recycling – On the Road to Zero Waste" newsletter brings practical information and tips about recycling and other zero waste practices to recipients.

The "Less Waste Better Baltimore" operational plan and the draft "Ten Year Solid Waste Management Plan (2024 – 2033)" both look at the ways in which Baltimore City manages its waste stream and make recommendations on how current practices of waste disposal could transition to waste diversion processes and programs. The intent is to change the culture of throwing away waste, to one that recognizes the value of many of the materials that are tossed (e.g. recyclables; food recovery programs; composting; fix-it clinics for electronics and small appliances; reuse of textiles). The Department continues to believe that shifting to a waste diversion model of solid waste management will narrow the amount of waste that must be disposed of and broaden the opportunities for repurposing and reusing what we routinely discard today.

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
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Representatives of the Department of Public Works will attend the hearing on City Council Resolution 23-0161R to assist with the Committee's discussion of the City's littering and dumping problem and how to educate residents and visitors about their role in helping to keep the city clean.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RJL', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard J. Luna
Interim Director

RJL/MMC