

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 05-0073R  
(Resolution)**

---

Introduced by: Councilmembers Holton, Kraft, Young, Curran, Spector, Rawlings Blake,  
Reisinger, Conaway, Clarke, Branch, Harris, Mitchell, D'Adamo, Welch  
Introduced and read first time: August 15, 2005  
Assigned to: Education, Housing, Health, and Human Services Committee

---

Committee Report: Favorable  
Adopted: April 16, 2007

---

**A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING**

**Informational Hearing – Recycling in Baltimore City**

FOR the purpose of reviewing the City's Recycling Program to determine the effectiveness of the program in diverting recyclables from un-reusable waste; to ascertain the percentage of Baltimore residents and businesses participating in the program; and to discover if incentive programs, information campaigns, and community involvement could be utilized to improve the current rate at which city residents participate in the program.

**Recitals**

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States currently recycles nearly 30% of its waste, a rate that has doubled during the past 15 years. During this time, governments, non-profit organizations, and companies have engaged in various programs to raise consumer awareness of available recycling options, impacting consumer behavior to the extent that 40% of all plastic soda bottles and 55% of all beverage cans are now recycled. Still, 70% of solid waste is burned at combustion facilities and disposed of in landfills.

Governing, a publication of Congressional Quarterly, Inc., reports that, after years of decline and fall, recycling is in a revival mode, even in urban areas where demographics and density make it harder to get residents to participate, and that cities across the country are instigating new policies to improve the rates at which their residents divert material from landfills. Cities are motivated by the rising cost of tipping fees and transportation costs or are driven by citizen demands for environmentally friendly policies.

One of the most inventive approaches is Philadelphia's, where the city has developed a pilot program to increase the very low rate of residential recycling by, in effect, paying residents to recycle. To encourage participation, the city is offering residents gift certificates to local retail outlets. The amount of the certificate is based on the weight of recyclable material picked up by recycling trucks that are specially outfitted with scales that can weigh a household's recyclables to the ounce at curbside.

The Philadelphia process is further streamlined by having each bin marked with a radio frequency identifier that correlates with the household to which it belongs. Residents are awarded a \$5 gift certificate for every 10 pounds of recycled material, up to \$25 a month. Recycling rates are already showing a 40% increase in tonnage in the pilot neighborhoods, the

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.  
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken by amendment.

**Council Bill 05-0073R**

1 city’s haulers have increased their efficiency with the help of bigger trucks and a single-stream  
2 processing center, and the city’s recycling coordinator says the program will save the city money  
3 on trash disposal.

4 Oakland, California, having passed the statewide 50% requirement for several years, is  
5 pushing for a 75% diversion rate by 2010, by providing separate 64 gallon carts for trash, regular  
6 recyclables, yard waste, and food scraps. The food scraps component caused a minor setback  
7 because of the “yuck factor” in dealing with unrefrigerated spoilables, so the city distributed  
8 small plastic containers that fit under sinks and made it easier for people to collect.

9 In Seattle, city officials are upgrading the already successful program by having trash  
10 collectors check residents’ garbage for un-diverted recyclables. This year warnings will be  
11 issued for those who don’t comply with recycling rules; next year the consequences will escalate  
12 in that trash that contains more than 10% of recyclable materials will not be picked up by the  
13 city, and non-compliant residents will have to go to the trouble and expense of having the trash  
14 disposed of by themselves.

15 The Maryland Department of the Environment reports that Baltimore recycled 40% of its  
16 waste in 2001 and 42% in 2002, but by 2003 had fallen back to 40%. Here bottles and cans  
17 (including glass jars, glass bottles, aluminum cans, tin cans, all plastic small mouth containers  
18 imprinted with #1 or #2, and empty aerosol cans) are collected on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of the  
19 month citywide. Paper (including newspapers, magazines, phone books, ad mail,  
20 cardboard/boxes, mixed paper, and scrap paper) are picked up on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weeks of the  
21 month according to designated zones.

22 Currently officials of the Recycling Program in the Department of Public Works do not have  
23 statistics on the estimated total tonnage that could be recycled in the City, nor are there any  
24 figures on the percentage or number of Baltimore households that are actively participating in  
25 the recycling effort. A comprehensive review of our program will ensure that Baltimore is doing  
26 its part to protect the environment and enhance the overall standard of living in our city, our  
27 state, and our country.

28 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this  
29 Body will review the City’s Recycling Program to determine the effectiveness of the program in  
30 diverting recyclables from un-reusable waste; to ascertain the percentage of Baltimore residents  
31 and businesses participating in the program; and to discover if incentive programs, information  
32 campaigns, and community involvement could be utilized to improve the current rate at which  
33 city residents participate in the program.

34 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
35 Director of Public Works, the Baltimore Health Commissioner, those listed in the Department of  
36 Planning Directory of Community Associations, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City  
37 Council.