Baltimore City Office of Emergency Management
1201 E. Cold Spring Lane
Baltimore, Maryland 21239
(410) 396-6188

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
City of Baltimore

Chief Charles Svehla
Emergency Manager
Office of Emergency Management

To: Honorable President Mosby, and Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council

Room 400 City Hall

From: Chief James Wallace, Acting Director, Office of Emergency Management

501 N. Calvert St - Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Date: June 15, 2021

RE: Council Bill 21-0075 - Study and Report – Sewage Backup Expedited Reimbursement and Direct Assistance Program

The Acting Director of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the OEM Deputy Director (Finance & Admin) will be present for the June 16, 2021 10:00 AM hearing regarding Study and Report – Sewage Backup Expedited Reimbursement and Direct Assistance Program. As Acting Director of OEM, I submit the following report / testimony regarding OEM's role in DPW's study and report.

Thank you for your support, time, and consideration.

Chief James Wallace
Acting Director, City of Baltimore Office of Emergency Management

JW/jlm

Cc: Honorable Mayor, Brandon M. Scott
    Chief Administrative Officer, Christopher J. Shorter
    Chief of Staff, Michael Huber
    Deputy Mayor, Public Safety, Sunny Schnitzer
    Deputy City Administrator, Daniel Ramos
    Fire Chief, Niles R. Ford
    Acting Emergency Manager, Chief Charles Svehla

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The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is responsible for ensuring the City of Baltimore is prepared for all incidents, emergencies, disasters, and special events. While OEM is not the lead agency in the study and report referred to in Council Bill 21-0075, our office is a partner in the City's planning, prevention, and response efforts. We assist the lead agency with planning, coordination, acquiring additional resources, and requesting mutual aid, as necessary. We also include methods for addressing sewage backups in our outreach efforts in the community. OEM stands ready to assist as needed during the DPW's process to conduct the study and publish the report.

Following is OEM's previous testimony provided concerning sewer backups for background reference (everything in red was previous testimony in 17-0052R and 19-0159R).

In 2019 and in 2018, OEM responded to questions the City Council had regarding similar issues in Council Hearing 17-0052R: Informational Hearing – Baltimore's Disaster Preparedness (2018) and in Council Hearing 19-0159R: Investigative Hearing – Building Backups of Untreated Sewage. This memo quotes parts of OEM's responses for those two hearings since they are still relevant. Such quotes will be marked with quotation marks and colored red.

"In the 2018 response, it is noted that [OEM] achieves [its operational preparedness goal] through a number of efforts, including:
- Writing / updating the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
- Ensuring all agencies have a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) as per AM 110-1 by providing technical assistance in writing these documents
- Writing / updating the City's Continuity of Government (COG) plan
- Activating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and assisting with setup and proper operations of Incident Command(s) in the field, as requested
- Staffing a 24 hours per day, 365 days per year on-call Duty Officer program which takes responses to small or large scale incidents as requested or by [OEM] standard operation procedure
- Expending Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) and Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) grant funds on supplies, equipment, trainings, conferences, etc. to ensure all City agencies have the resources and skills needed to respond to emergencies
- Hosting and participating in other agencies' and stakeholders' table top exercises (TTXs), functional drills, full scale exercises, etc.
- Supporting the development of agency level Incident Management Teams (IMTs), as well as, supporting the new statewide IMT effort led by the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
- Coordinating with MEMA on regional or statewide responses, and on fulfilling requests for mutual aid assistance
- Assisting, as requested, in Incident Action Plan (IAP) development or development of any public safety reference guide(s) needed for special events or incidents
- Implementing a new Unified Mass Notification System, CodeRED from Onsolve, to provide internal and external alerts to city stakeholders and citizens in MOEM's efforts to fulfill its duties as outlined in ESF 11 – Public Information and Warning

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- Leading hot washes, hosting after action conferences, and writing After Action Reports (AARs) after incidents so that lessons learned from incidents are not forgotten and are used to improve city-wide preparedness and operations moving forward
- Implementing several programs for community preparedness

During an incident where there was a major flooding issue that involved sanitary sewer line damage, contamination, or overflow, the lead agency would be DPW (or BCFD if rescues were necessary). It might be possible that BCHD could assume the lead if the incident were to turn into a public health emergency.

Regarding EOC activation, the prior hearing noted that "[OEM] also staffs and may help open / organize Incident Command either in the field or adjacent to the EOC at various locations (e.g. EOC1 – 414. North Calvert; EOC2 – 1201 E. Cold Spring Lane; the EOC at BPD HQ; etc.). Incident commands are more concerned with operations of the lead and core support agencies out in the field, and are concerned more with particular tactical decisions, standard operating procedures (SOPs), staffing levels, etc. as designated by the Incident Commander. **Some events / incidents may require both an Incident Command and EOC Activation, while others may require one or the other. Some incidents may utilize multiple area commands if necessary. The City's approach to this is usually flexible.**"

[OEM] does have a flood annex to the Emergency Operations Plan that describes the steps we general [sic] take to monitor flooding and alert citizens to conditions to help mitigate potential damage from such an incident. Of course, every incident is different / unique and the EOP follows the national best practice of taking an all-hazards approach that is capability based, and therefore flexible. [OEM] through its duty officer program, staffing of any incident command, and through potential activation of the EOC would support the lead agency with planning support, logistical support, etc. The [OEM] duty officer will be dispatched by BCFD communications or the [OEM] Director or [Acting] Deputy Director of Operations and Homeland Security, and provide immediate support until any EOC activation were to occur.

The 2018 report to the council also noted that "[OEM] also coordinates with MEMA on regional or statewide responses, and on fulfilling requests for mutual aid assistance. [OEM] is also the City's link to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). [OEM] assists in the disaster declaration process and is responsible for seeking financial reimbursement for the City from the federal government following presidentially declared disasters." This would be the case if there was a sewage flooding incident that became an emergency and mutual aid was necessary. [OEM] would work with the lead agency to create and submit Req-A forms to MEMA to request resources as needed.

BMORE Alert, our branding for the City's Mass Alert system powered by CodeRED from OnSolve, might be used along other tools such as the City Watch lists (email distribution lists), [OEM's] twitter @BaltimoreOEM, and direct communications to the major media outlets to alert the public to any danger and give critical instructions and information from the lead agency and [OEM]. In addition, as [OEM] Director, I may appear on television and/or radio, alongside the incident commander or lead agency's Public Information Officer (PIO), to distribute information.

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Currently any EOC activation beyond Level III: Watch Level would likely physically be located at the" new EOC located at 501 N. Calvert Street.

"At the hearing I will be present and have a copy of the Emergency Operations Plan as well as the associated Flood Specific annex. Most of it is not directly related [to] sewage issues but given the city's infrastructure, riverine, coastal, or localized flash flooding from heavy rain can contribute to sewage issues. The…Office of Emergency Management will stand ready to assist the lead agency in such scenarios as it has in past incidents. [OEM] is also the lead agency for Recovery so, as an incident transitions from active incident / emergency to recovery, [OEM] will lead recovery efforts with the assistance of the appropriate city agencies and non-governmental partners we have worked with in the past such as the Red Cross, the United Way, BGE, the Salvation Army, Team Rubicon, the faith based [sic] community including numerous churches, synagogues, and mosques, etc."