

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 09-0124R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: President Rawlings-Blake, Councilmembers D'Adamo, Young, Clarke,  
Middleton, Reisinger, Welch, Henry, Cole, Branch, Kraft, Curran, Conaway, Holton, Spector  
Introduced and read first time: March 30, 2009  
Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Housing and Community Development,  
Department of Public Works

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Razed and Vacant Houses - Notice to Disconnect Utilities**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Commissioner of Housing, the Director of Construction and  
4 Demolition, the Director of Public Works, the Chief of the Bureau of Water and Waste Water  
5 Utility Billing Division, and the Senior Vice President, BGE Customer Relations & Account  
6 Services, to report to the City Council on the notification process for discontinuing utility  
7 services to properties that become vacant or are scheduled for demolition.

8 **Recitals**

9 The Construction and Demolition division of the Department of Housing each year oversees  
10 the demolition of more than 300 unsafe structures throughout the City. In addition, the Office  
11 condemns vacant and abandoned properties. The program demolishes properties in both a  
12 planned and emergency basis.

13 In order to provide for the shut-off of utilities in planned demolitions, Construction and  
14 Demolition officials monthly fax a list of properties slated to be razed to the Department of  
15 Public Works and BGE gas and electric utility divisions. In emergent situations direct contact is  
16 made with a 'point' person in each facility.

17 While the Department of Public Works and BGE have a streamlined process for ensuring  
18 shut-offs in emergency and planned situations, problems may arise if utility services have not  
19 been discontinued. Until the meter is removed, property owners incur quarterly maintenance  
20 charges, as they are responsible for any water that passes through the meter. These fees and any  
21 additional costs related to pilfered utility services or undetected water leaks could result in  
22 substantial bills for residents and the City.

23 In light of the current economy and budget constraints, an accurate and timely notification  
24 system for the discontinuance of utility services could mitigate the substantial fees associated  
25 with these services in vacant homes or properties scheduled for demolition. As important, this  
26 hearing would serve to educate the Council and the citizens about the role of utility service  
27 providers and property owners in this process.

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

**Council Bill 09-0124R**

1       **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
2 Commissioner the Commissioner of Housing, the Director of Construction and Demolition, the  
3 Director of Public Works, the Chief of the Bureau of Water and Waste Water Utility Billing  
4 Division, and the Senior Vice President, BGE Customer Relations & Account Services report to  
5 the City Council on the notification process for discontinuing utility services to properties that  
6 become vacant or are scheduled for demolition.

7       **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That these entities form a coalition to ensure the timely  
8 distribution of utility discontinuation notices to property owners and report to the Council on the  
9 effect of these notices on these related fees

10       **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
11 Commissioner of Housing, the Director of Construction and Demolition, the Director of Public  
12 Works, the Chief of the Bureau of Water and Waste Water Utility Billing Division, the Senior  
13 Vice President, BGE Customer Relations & Account Services, and the Mayor’s Legislative  
14 Liaison to the City Council.