

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 26-0056R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Ramos

Cosponsored by: Councilmembers Parker, Conway, Middleton, Gray, Bullock, Blanchard, and Jones

Introduced and read first time: June 15, 2026

Assigned to: Committee on Legislative Investigations

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Office of the Comptroller, Department of Public Works, Mayor's Office of Government Relations, Office of Equity and Civil Rights

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Regional Water Governance**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Office of the Baltimore City Comptroller,
4 the Department of Public Works, the Mayor's Office of Government Relations, the Office of
5 Equity and Civil Rights, and any other relevant agencies to report on the topics outlined in
6 this Resolution and provide additional information as needed by the Council.

7 **Recitals**

8 Baltimore City's water is among the best quality water in the country. In the 2024 Water
9 Quality Report, Baltimore City's water contaminants are below the United States Environmental
10 Protection Agency's standard. Baltimore's water and sewer system was ahead of its time when it
11 was developed and built over 140 years ago. While the water, wastewater, and stormwater
12 infrastructure is aging, the quality of Baltimore's water continues to be top-notch.

13 Despite Baltimore's exceptional water quality, residents express dismay about the inequities
14 in the system, particularly around water billing. Baltimore City residents pay much more than
15 Baltimore County residents, despite Baltimore County subsidizing the cost of the water bills.

16 The Baltimore City Department of Public Works has made great strides in improving billing,
17 with a focus on quality customer service to make adjustments to bills if there are any mistakes or
18 if there is a large bill because of a leak. Several of the concerns outlined in the 2021
19 Water/Sewer Services Comprehensive Business Process Review have been corrected.

20 In 2023 the Maryland General Assembly created the Regional Water Governance Task Force,
21 which met throughout 2023 and 2024 to study the results of the 2021 report. It was intended to
22 seek regional cooperation and explore options for improvements to the water system. At the time
23 the City Council was not included in the work, but it held hearings to understand the work of the
24 Task Force. The City Council passed a resolution and presented it to the Task Force
25 emphasizing that the City Council should be included in the work, and that any regional system
26 should look at stormwater in addition to drinking water, focusing on both equity and
27 affordability.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Council Bill 26-0056R

1 The Task Force finished its work in 2024 and created an extensive report that outlined both
2 the improvements that the Baltimore City Department of Public Works has made and the
3 challenges for regionalism, including debt, infrastructure needs, and more.

4 During the 2024 General Assembly session, HB1509 created the Baltimore Regional Water
5 Governance Model Workgroup. The Workgroup is intended to continue looking at regional
6 water governance models, and to provide a transition plan upon selecting a model. At their first
7 meeting on January 7th, 2026, the Chair of the Workgroup announced that the creation of a
8 regional water authority was not going to be considered.

9 The City Council welcomes the opportunity to receive updates from the officials involved
10 with this Workgroup to get regular updates and reporting on the results of their meetings.

11 The City Council would specifically like to request any information on the following:

- 12 (1) an outline of the recommendations from the Task Force;
- 13 (2) updates on what the Workgroup is considering for regional cooperation;
- 14 (3) how public comment will be received by the Workgroup;
- 15 (4) how stormwater management factors into the Workgroup's consideration;
- 16 (5) the impact of any regional model on jobs;
- 17 (6) the impact of any regional model on water billing and water bill affordability;
- 18 (7) recommendations for any changes in the current agreements between Baltimore City
19 and surrounding jurisdictions; and
- 20 (8) the results of an equity assessment for any model that is recommended.

21 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the City
22 Council invites representatives from the Office of the Baltimore City Comptroller, the
23 Department of Public Works, the Mayor's Office of Government Relations, the Office of Equity
24 and Civil Rights, and any other relevant agencies to report on the topics outlined in this
25 Resolution and provide additional information as needed by the Council.

26 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Baltimore City
27 Comptroller, the Director of the Department of Public Works, the Director of the Mayor's Office
28 of Government Relations, the Director of the Office of Equity and Civil Rights, and the Mayor's
29 Legislative Liaison to the City Council.