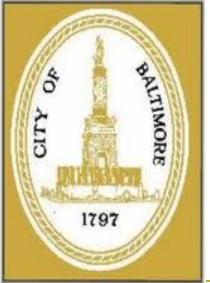


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Jason W. Mitchell, Acting Director	CITY of BALTIMORE <i>MEMO</i>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 21-0075		

June 14, 2021

TO:

Health, Environment, and Technology Committee

I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 21-0075 introduced by Council Members Burnett, Cohen, Dorsey, Ramos, and Bullock.

The purpose of the Bill is to require that the Baltimore City Department of Public Works submit a report to the Mayor and City Council studying the feasibility of implementing an expedited reimbursement and direct assistance program for any sewage backup, not limited to wet weather, capacity-related causes; require certain agency assistance; and provide for a special effective date.

Baltimore City’s Consent Decree is implementing improvements to the sanitary sewer system that will reduce the occurrences of sanitary sewer overflows during wet weather events. Work performed under the Consent Decree includes: a computerized hydraulic model of the sanitary sewer system to test capacity of the system under various scenarios; rehabilitating sewer pipes and manhole stacks to limit the amount of clear water entering the system; cleaning and lining sewer pipes to ensure free flow of sewage and limited inflow of clear water; replacing pipes that cannot be rehabilitated and increasing pipe sizes to adequately contain flows during peak usage periods; and identifying and correcting illicit connections to the sewer system. Construction of the Back River Headworks project eliminated a nearly 10-mile hydraulic restriction within the sewer system.


The Department of Public Works established the pilot Building Backup Expedited Reimbursement Program in 2018 as part of the Modified Consent Decree. It was specifically established to provide quick reimbursement of cleaning and disinfection costs incurred by a customer for a basement backup caused by sewer pipe capacity issues during wet weather events, the very issues being addressed by the Consent Decree. Subsequently, the Department added a second pilot program, the Sewage Onsite Support Cleanup Program (the SOS program), which

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provides contracted cleaning and disinfecting services at no cost to customers, if the backup was determined to be caused by a wet weather event and capacity issues in the public system.

City Council Bill 21-0075, if approved, would require, within 60 days of its enactment, that the Department of Public Works prepare and submit a report to the Mayor and City Council regarding the feasibility of providing reimbursements under the Expedited Reimbursement Program and cleaning and disinfecting services under the SOS Program, for all building backups, whether caused by a wet weather event or for those that occur during dry weather. The cost analysis included in the report is required to be disaggregated in four ways: wet weather backups caused by conditions in the public system, and by conditions in private systems; and dry weather backups caused by conditions in the public system, and by conditions in private systems. The report would also require an evaluation of funds the City has expended in claims related to building backups over the past 10 years.

If City Council Bill 21-0075 is enacted, the Department of Public Works will collaborate with the Departments of Law, Health, Housing and Community Development, the Baltimore City Information and Technology office, and the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, to produce the required study and report.



Jason W. Mitchell
Acting Director

JWM/MMC