

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 17-0098  
(First Reader)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Bullock, Middleton, Henry, Schleifer, Pinkett, Scott, Burnett, Cohen, Stokes, Dorsey, Sneed, Reisinger, President Young, Councilmember Costello

Introduced and read first time: July 17, 2017

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Department of Public Works

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Water Bills – Restoring Informal Conferences**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Director of Public Works to provide informal conferences to  
4 certain customers seeking an abatement of water charges before water service is cut-off for  
5 nonpayment, or other actions are taken to collect on delinquent water accounts; clarifying and  
6 conforming related provisions; and generally relating to City water billing.

7 BY repealing, and reordaining with amendments

8 Article 24 - Water

9 Section(s) 2-2

10 Baltimore City Code

11 (Edition 2000)

12 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
13 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

14 **Baltimore City Code**

15 **Article 24. Water**

16 **Subtitle 2. Bills**

17 **§ 2-2. Abatements.**

18 (a) *Director may abate.*

19 The Director of Public Works [shall have full power and authority to] MAY abate any  
20 charge for water made against any property, whether the [same be] CHARGE WAS made by  
21 meter, fixed charge, or otherwise, whenever the Director [in his discretion may], for any  
22 cause, [deem such] DEEMS AN abatement proper and advisable.

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

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1 (b) *Scope.*

2 [Said] AN abatement UNDER THIS SECTION may, in the discretion of the Director of Public  
3 Works, be of the whole or any part of the charge [so made], and [upon such] ON ANY  
4 terms and conditions [as] SET BY the Director [may deem advisable and may prescribe].

5 (C) *INFORMAL CONFERENCE.*

6 (1) ANY PERSON SEEKING AN ABATEMENT UNDER THIS SECTION MAY REQUEST AN  
7 INFORMAL CONFERENCE WITH A NEUTRAL PARTY TO DISCUSS THE REASONS WHY THEY  
8 BELIEVE AN ABATEMENT SHOULD BE GRANTED.

9 (2) A RESIDENTIAL OWNER-OCCUPIED CUSTOMER, OR RESIDENTIAL TENANT AUTHORIZED  
10 BY THE OWNER TO BE ADDED TO THE ACCOUNT FOR THE TENANT’S RESIDENCE,  
11 REQUESTING AN INFORMAL CONFERENCE UNDER THIS SUBSECTION WHO HAS NOT HAD  
12 A CONFERENCE IN THE PREVIOUS 365 DAYS MUST BE GRANTED A CONFERENCE BEFORE  
13 THE DIRECTOR MAY:

14 (I) CUT OFF SERVICE FOR NON-PAYMENT; OR

15 (II) TAKE ANY OTHER FORMAL ACTION TO COLLECT ON A DELINQUENT ACCOUNT.

16 (3) CONFERENCES UNDER THIS SUBSECTION MUST BE PROVIDED TO CUSTOMERS WITHOUT  
17 CHARGE.

18 (4) AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCE, THE NEUTRAL PARTY MUST MAKE A  
19 VERBAL RECOMMENDATION TO THE REQUESTOR REGARDING WHETHER AN  
20 ABATEMENT SHOULD BE GRANTED AND, IF SO, THE AMOUNT OF ANY RECOMMENDED  
21 ABATEMENT. THIS RECOMMENDATION MUST THEN BE PRESENTED TO THE DIRECTOR  
22 OF PUBLIC WORKS.

23 (5) WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE CONFERENCE, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS MUST  
24 PROVIDE A WRITTEN NOTIFICATION TO THE CUSTOMER WHO ATTENDED THE  
25 CONFERENCE ABOUT WHAT, IF ANY, ABATEMENT HAS BEEN GRANTED.

26 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That the catchlines contained in this Ordinance  
27 are not law and may not be considered to have been enacted as a part of this or any prior  
28 Ordinance.

29 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30<sup>th</sup> day  
30 after the date it is enacted.