



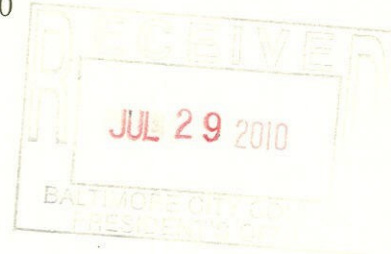
BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE
Mayor

FREDERICK H. BEALEFELD, III
Police Commissioner

July 27, 2010



TO: The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400 City Hall
Attn. Karen Randle

FROM: *JHG*
James H. Green, Deputy Chief Legal Counsel
Baltimore Police Department

RE: City Council Bill 10-0213R-Investigative Hearing-Dirt Bikes on City
Streets

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) is pleased to address City Council Resolution 10-0213R-Investigative Hearing-Dirt Bikes on City Streets. The resolution requests that the BPD, Director of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Transportation provide information to the Council and report about impact of illegal dirt bikes on the welfare, safety, and enjoyment of Baltimore City neighborhoods, parks, and transportation system. Additionally the Resolution requests that the City agencies work together with the Council to develop a comprehensive plan to address the persistent problem of illegal dirt bikes in the City.

Baltimore is faced with many issues surrounding the illegal riding of "dirt bikes". Many citizens are threatened by the operators of these vehicles who fail to follow any rules of the road and zoom in and out of traffic on the city streets. There is a very serious public and personal safety risk to all citizens including the riders posed by the illegal operation of these vehicles. The BPD officers are left with few options other than arrest of the operator and are not permitted to chase the riders because of the associated dangers including the strong possibility of creating additional danger to the citizens, our officers, and the operators of the dirt bikes. The Resolution cites several recent examples of the dangers associated with dirt bikes, one of which ended tragically with the death of a Maryland resident who attempted to avoid a collision with an individual illegally riding on the City streets.

Over the last several years, this Council has held hearings about the illegal operation of dirt bikes and enacted regulations dealing with immobilizing and forfeiture of these vehicles. These types of vehicles come into the City's possession under

Comments

numerous circumstances including their seizure for being illegally operated, as abandoned property, and as stolen property. While the seizure and forfeiture of dirt bikes or similar vehicles can be a very effective enforcement tool against the persons who violate this law, the penalties alone associated with violating the law are not enough and a collective City effort must be mounted to deliver an overall plan to address this “persistent” issue.

The Council President recently hosted several meetings with “dirt bike enthusiasts” and City agencies to begin discussions about how this overall issue can be addressed. This is a beginning but it remains incumbent upon the City to move forward quickly so that our citizens and visitors can feel safe from the illegal operation of dirt bikes in Baltimore. We cannot afford additional tragedy by those who engage in reckless behavior.

The BPD welcomes the opportunity to share additional information with the Council on this issue and stands willing to assist in the City’s collective efforts in this area. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

cc: Angela Gibson, Mayor’s Legislative Liaison