

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 12-0064R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Kraft, Scott, Henry, Spector, Middleton, Mosby, Holton,
Welch, Reisinger, Cole, Stokes, Branch, Curran
Introduced and read first time: August 13, 2012
Assigned to: Housing and Community Development Committee
Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
Adopted: October 15, 2012

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

1 Informational Hearing - Lessons Learned from the June Derecho

2 FOR the purpose of calling upon representatives of Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE)
3 to meet in public discussion with the City Council, and our constituents, to respond to
4 observations and requests arising from the recent derecho storm and its aftermath; and to
5 begin a cooperative effort to help us all minimize widespread outages in the future and to
6 better communicate accurate and timely information to the public during crisis situations.

7 Recitals

8
9 **WHEREAS**, on the night of June 29-30, beginning after 10pm on the 29th, Maryland and
10 Baltimore City were struck by a derecho storm, an extreme weather event featuring violent
11 sustained lightening storms and damaging winds of nearly 70 mph.

12 **WHEREAS**, unlike a hurricane or tropical storm of similar strength, the derecho struck a broad
13 swath of the U.S. with very little advanced warning.

14 **WHEREAS**, nationwide, more than 4 million utility customers lost power as a result of the
15 derecho.

16 **WHEREAS**, in Maryland, BGE reported that the storm downed more than 9200 wires, cutting
17 off power to 762,000 customers.

18 **WHEREAS**, in Baltimore, more than 350 downed trees and other damage led to in excess of
19 90,000 BGE customers losing power.

20 **WHEREAS**, customers were without power, during a heat wave with sustained temperatures
21 over 100 degrees, for 38 hours on average, and tens of thousands of Baltimore homes were
22 without power for days, with BGE not announcing that it had restored power to all customers
23 until July 8, more than a full week after the storm.

24 **WHEREAS**, the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) has offered the public
25 opportunities to file complaints and concerns for review and action.

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

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1 **WHEREAS**, the Baltimore City Council urges all BGE customers and neighborhood leaders to
2 either testify or send written reports to the PSC with their complaints and their recommendations
3 for more effective and timely BGE responses when even unexpected storms result in future
4 widespread outages.

5 **WHEREAS**, for all its concerns, the City Council especially appreciates BGE’s assignment of
6 ~~two~~ three able and committed liaisons, Tawanda Howe, Linda Foy, and Ervin McDaniel, to the
7 City’s Emergency Operations Center for the duration of the eight day power outage.

8 **WHEREAS**, many constituents have also expressed appreciation for the courtesy and
9 competence of local and out of state crews dispatched to solve their neighborhoods’ power
10 outages.

11 **WHEREAS**, to prevent extended outages in the future, the Council calls upon BGE to report to
12 its membership and our constituents on plans for better preparedness on future such occasions,
13 especially in:

- 14 ● affording the city comparable outage restoration rates, from the outset, to other
15 subdivisions within BGE’s service area;
- 16 ● improving phone and website staffing and communications with the public about
17 estimated times of restoration;
- 18 ● improving communications to ground crews as to accurate outage locations and
19 equipment required to effect restoration --- so as to minimize the dispatch of crews
20 unequipped to make the restorations required, to the frustration of crews and the
21 added wait for consumers;
- 22 ● employing sufficient ground personnel so that small clusters of outages are no longer
23 relegated to “last in line” status extending into as many as 8 days on this last
24 occasion.

25 **WHEREAS**, the June 29, 2012, derecho and its aftermath have demonstrated the need for BGE
26 to identify and upgrade certain city power networks which either chronically fail, even between
27 major storms, or which require more frequent and thorough pruning of obstructing trees and
28 branches.

29 **WHEREAS**, to this preventive end, the Council calls upon BGE to undertake a series of public
30 meetings, as requested, with power network constituents and their neighborhood associations, to
31 expedite the correction of weak points affecting reliable power to their homes and
32 neighborhoods.

33 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the
34 Council calls upon representatives of Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) to meet in
35 public discussion with the Council, and our constituents, to respond to these observations and
36 requests; and to begin a cooperative effort to help us all minimize widespread outages in the
37 future and to better communicate accurate and timely information to the public during crisis
38 situations.

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1 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
2 President and CEO of Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, the Director of the Mayor’s Office
3 of Emergency Management, BGE’s liaisons to the Mayor’s Office of Emergency Management,
4 and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.