
CITY OF BALTIMORE

Brandon M. Scott – Mayor
Zeke Cohen – Council President



Office of Council Services

Nancy Mead – Director
100 Holliday Street, Room 415
Baltimore, MD 21202

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

The Honorable Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer
CHAIR

HEARING NOTES

25-0017R

Informational Hearing – Water-for-All – Program Update

Hearing Date: 10/16/2025

Hearing Start Time: 4:30 PM

Hearing End Time: X:00 PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

Total Estimated Attendance: 20

Committee Members in Attendance:

- **Chair** Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer
- Vice Chair Antonio Glover
- Paris Gray
- Sharon Green Middleton

Additional Councilmembers in Attendance

- Odette Ramos
 - Jermaine Jones
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MAJOR SPEAKERS

(This is NOT an attendance record.)

- Christine Griffin – Department of Public Works
 - Penny Lewis – Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success
 - Terrence Jennings – Department of Public Works
 - R. Anthony Mills – Department of Public Works
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NOTES

- The Chair began by introducing the resolution and its sponsor, Councilwoman Ramos
- Councilwoman Ramos gave some opening remarks on the Water-for-All program
 - Created to ensure that more people had access to a water usage discount
 - Expands access to renters
 - Some delays in implementing the program
 - This hearing serves to understand how it is going and examine how we can improve
 - Including how to get more people enrolled
 - Invited a constituent to speak briefly
 - Indicated that the program's implementation has been horrendous
 - The constituent expressed major frustrations with the programs

- MOCFS discussed the program's history and information on how discounts/checks are calculated
- The Chair asked whether there was a method to how marketing calls are made
 - MOCFS – it is not targeted, based off a list
- DPW discussed some data surrounding applicants
 - The Chair noted that the program seemingly serves a large group of younger people
- The Chair inquired on how many employees were working on the program
 - The agencies estimated about 10
- Councilman Gray asked why median household size fluctuated between 1-2; why weren't families bigger?
 - DPW - Lots of applicants are single
 - Gray – based on the age ranges identified, seems that these are low
- Councilman Gray also asked why fewer credits were given but at a higher value – were the same amount of people being helped
 - MOCFS – BH20 was an automatic enrollment vs. income based W4A
 - Is there anything in place to help those now denied folks?
 - DPW – the Tier system (in slides) should lead to an increase
- Vice Chair Glover asked whether there is any sort of narrative/qualitative data on the program
 - Are there any stories, focus groups, etc.
 - DPW – we have not yet begun to collect that sort of data because of how fast we had to stand up the program
 - Lots of people are looking to lower arrears
- Vice Chair Glover also asked whether there are any partnerships to educate individuals in need
 - DPW – did not highlight any partnerships but did discuss information that its representatives could share
 - MOCFS – strong focus on casework and they do try to direct to other city agencies/options
- Councilwoman Ramos thanked those representatives in attendance
 - There could be a marketing opportunity in schools
 - Asked what BH20 threshold and credit was
 - Credit was 43% of a bill and bay restoration fees were not applied, the eligibility was at or below 175% federal poverty guidelines were eligible
 - Additional support for customers at or below 50% of the federal poverty guidelines
 - How was it automatic if income based
 - DPW - Sent from state of Maryland
 - Asked whether water for all removed any stormwater or bay water restoration fees?
 - DPW – correct
- Councilman Jones identified a potential gap – when people engage with the program, they are already in arrears
 - We should work to anticipate people who sign up with existing deficits
 - DPW – Code does allow for the department to create a program to assist but would need to determine how best to stand up that sort of program
 - Councilwoman Ramos suggests that the water affordability and equity act suggests that the same amount should be reduced from those individual's debt
- Public Testimony was generally supportive and encourages auto-enrollment effort

FURTHER STUDY REQUESTED

Request	From	Agency
Confirm the total overhead for the Water-for-All Program	Schleifer	Finance, MOCFS, DPW, BCIT, MOGR
What was the BH20 automatic enrollment process and why was that automatic enrollment not carried on	Ramos	DPW, MOGR

Hearing Packet in bill file? ----- ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Attendance Sheet in bill file? ----- ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Agency reports read? ----- ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? ----- ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the bill file? ----- ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**
Evidence of notification to property owners in bill file? ----- ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**

Notes by: Ethan Navarre
Notes Date: 10/16/2025

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