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	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 16-0739 Environmental Control Board – Board Composition			

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BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

TO The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
DATE: October 5, 2016

The Baltimore City Environmental Control Board (ECB) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 16-0739, Environmental Control Board – Board Composition. The purpose of the bill is to change the current composition of the Environmental Control Board.

The ECB strongly favors the proposed changes to the composition of Board membership. The composition of the Board is outlined in Article I, section 40-2(b) and the function of the Board is to hear appeals from the recommended decisions made by Hearing Officers at the ECB. Additionally, the Board is responsible for maintaining the Rules and Regulations of the ECB.

The current composition of the Board includes six ex officio members, or their respective designee, from the following agencies and organizations: Health, Housing, Police, Fire, the Department of Public Works, and City Council. Each of the issuing agencies is represented through the ex officio membership requirements except the Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT is now issuing citations for valet violations and for food vendor licensing violations. Council Bill #16-0739 includes the addition of DOT as an ex officio member to the Board. It is appropriate for DOT to participate in board meetings to offer background information about the violations handled by the agency, to remain informed about the work of the ECB, and to participate in the appeals of hearings involving other agencies.

The current composition of the Board also includes seven members appointed by the Mayor with certain qualifications necessary, including: two members appointed from the general public, and five members with the following expertise requirements: real estate, small business, air or noise pollution, water pollution, and solid waste. These required qualifications were taken directly from the requirements of the New York City ECB and are not all applicable to the issues addressed by the Baltimore City ECB. Specifically, the qualification of “air or noise pollution” does not serve a purpose on the Baltimore City ECB. As a result, having an expert in the field of air or noise pollution has proven to be a waste of time for that expert and of no value to the functioning of the Board.

Council Bill 16-0739 replaces the “air or noise pollution” expertise requirement with “education”. One of the primary functions and purposes of the ECB is to change behavior related to the violations addressed by the agency. It is not possible to change behavior without education and the most effective way of changing behavior on a larger scale is to provide education at a young age. As a result the ECB has begun to develop an education program for school aged children focused on cleaner and healthier lifestyles. It is appropriate to have a representative on the Board who has experience in education and can help direct the agency through the task of developing and implanting an education program in Baltimore City.

Finally, Council Bill 16-0739 includes the addition of an expertise in “community advocacy.” The ECB has also engaged with the community to further the efforts in changing behavior related to the violations addressed by the agency. The ECB is a major participant in the Clean Corps program, which is a peer to peer network designed to empower residents and provide resources to enable residents to work within their own neighborhoods to keep it clean. It is appropriate for the Board membership to reflect the additional responsibilities taken on by the ECB to provide guidance and expertise in those fields.

For the reasons stated above, the ECB fully supports the proposals included in Council Bill 16-0739.

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