



## MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Alice Kennedy, Acting Housing Commissioner

Date: June 14, 2021

### **Re: City Council Bill 21-0075 Study and Report - Sewage Backup Expedited Reimbursement and Direct Assistance Program**

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 21-0075 for the purpose of requiring that the Baltimore City Department of Public Works submit a report to the Mayor and City Council studying the feasibility of implementing an expedited reimbursement and direct assistance program for any sewage backup, not limited to wet weather, capacity-related causes; requiring certain agency assistance; and providing for a special effective date.

If enacted, City Council Bill 21-0075 would require that the Baltimore City Department of Public Works submit a report to the Mayor and City Council detailing a comprehensive feasibility study regarding sewage backups. As drafted, the Law Department, Baltimore City Information Technology, the Baltimore City Health Department, and the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management will be required to assist the Department of Public Works in the preparation of the required report.

DHCD appreciates the intent of this Bill to examine the feasibility of implementing a program to reimburse City homeowners, renters, non-commercial occupants, and residents for the costs of cleaning and disinfecting after building sewage backups that are the result of both wet and dry weather events.

Sewage backups can pose serious health and safety issues and DHCD recognizes the importance of programs that can help curb or remediate such hazards. Sewage backups, basement ground water infiltration, and plumbing leaks can cause the growth of mold in housing which can negatively affect a family's health. Interior environmental quality is an essential component of achieving healthy and sustainable housing.

**DHCD takes no position** on the passage of City Council Bill 21-0075.

AK/sm

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*