



CITY OF BALTIMORE  
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

<b>TO</b>	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
<b>FROM</b>	Matthew W. Garbark, Director, Department of Public Works
<b>CC</b>	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
<b>DATE</b>	June 10, 2026
<b>SUBJECT</b>	26-0202 Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater

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**Position: Favorable**

### **BILL SYNOPSIS**

FOR the purpose establishing a Department of Water and Wastewater among the Executive Departments; providing for the powers and duties of the Department of Water and Wastewater; transferring certain powers and duties from the Department of Public Works to the Department of Water and Wastewater; repealing certain obsolete provisions; conforming, correcting, and clarifying related provisions; and submitting this amendment to the qualified voters of the City for adoption or rejection.

### **SUMMARY OF POSITION**

As operational demands, financial obligations, and regulatory requirements continue to evolve, the Department of Public Works (DPW) has gradually transitioned several of its core functions into stand-alone organizations. To maintain operational focus and reflect best practices across the country, Charter Amendment 26-0202 calls for the separation of the Bureau of Water and Wastewater (BWW) into an independent executive agency.

Separating the BWW would position the utility to operate as a true enterprise system funded by ratepayers. Nationwide, utilities are typically self-sustaining and operate with independent accounting and financial oversight. As an outlier, the City's current centralized financial structure has contributed to bond rating downgrades, delays in monitoring revenue and cash flow, and an inability to consistently meet key metrics like the Debt Service Coverage Ratio.

Establishing the BWW as an independent executive agency would allow DPW to focus on its core functions that include street sweeping, trash collection, and support services. The proposed realignment would enable each organization to operate with greater clarity, and the charter revision would reflect a more modern approach to delivering city services. Charter Amendment 26-0202 would ensure both DPW and the newly independent utility are better positioned to serve Baltimore residents and regional stakeholders.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on Charter Amendment 26-0202.

*City Hall – Room 250, 100 Holliday Street, Baltimore, MD 21202*