

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 10-0218R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: President Young, Councilmembers Branch, Kraft, Holton, Henry, Middleton,
Conaway, Welch, Reisinger, D'Adamo, Curran, Cole, Spector

Introduced and read first time: July 12, 2010

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Public Works

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **In Support of DPW's Water Management Authority**

3 FOR the purpose of supporting the continued management of the region's water system by the
4 Department of Public Works; and urging DPW to further strengthen its existing
5 communications mechanisms and ties with neighboring jurisdictions in order to ensure the
6 smooth creation and implementation of infrastructure improvement plans.

7 **Recitals**

8 Baltimore City has owned and operated its own water system since 1854. For nearly 90
9 years the City's Department of Public Works has also been responsible for the supply of drinking
10 water to the greater Baltimore Metropolitan Area beyond the City's borders. Today, DPW's
11 Bureau of Water & Wastewater's 1,700 employees ensure that high quality drinking water is
12 supplied to 1.8 million people throughout the region.

13 Many of the 3,400 miles of water mains operated by DPW are nearly 100 years old. Pipes
14 that old have generally far exceeded their designed life expectancy and they have therefore
15 begun to fail in increasing numbers. The resulting disruptions to water supplies in the City and
16 beyond have made it apparent to all parties that the region's water infrastructure requires a
17 systematic upgrade.

18 Acknowledging this fact, DPW has developed - and begun to implement - short, medium,
19 and long term plans to modernize the region's water distribution system. These plans have been
20 developed in consultation with all of the system's stakeholders, including those outside the City.
21 In accordance with DPW's plans for comprehensive improvements to the regional water system,
22 the City has budgeted nearly \$500 million over the next 5 years to rebuild and improve the
23 system.

24 Despite DPW's admirable and able management of the regional water system, there have
25 been election year calls in some outside circles to reduce or eliminate DPW's authority to
26 operate Baltimore's water system through the creation of a regional authority. This Council can
27 not support these proposals. The City's management of the water system builds on a century and
28 a half of tradition and experience while consistently delivering high quality water to all of its
29 users at reasonable rates. It's employees have a full understanding of every part of the existing
30 system and know both where changes need to be made and where likely failure points are

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

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1 located. In contrast, none of the surrounding jurisdictions have any comparable history of, or
2 expertise in, water system management.

3 A great deal of coordination and conversation with the counties is included in the current
4 system; and the counties are responsible for deciding on their own priorities regarding capital
5 construction. As the aging infrastructure essential to Baltimore's water supply is systematically
6 updated, these ties to the surrounding jurisdictions will have to be used and strengthened to
7 ensure that capital improvements continue to be coordinated and planned comprehensively.

8 However, the middle of a multi-year infrastructure improvement effort costing hundreds of
9 millions of dollars is not the appropriate time to change a management system that works well in
10 order to provide on the job training to officials unfamiliar with water distribution. Diverting
11 energy, time, and resources away from actually addressing infrastructure deterioration and
12 towards the creation of a new level of bureaucracy staffed by inexperienced political appointees
13 would likely prove counterproductive.

14 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
15 Council supports the continued management of the region's water system by the Department of
16 Public Works and urges DPW to further strengthen its existing communications mechanisms and
17 ties with neighboring jurisdictions in order to ensure the smooth creation and implementation of
18 infrastructure improvement plans.

19 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
20 Director of Public Works, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.