

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 17-0022R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Middleton, Costello, Dorsey, Pinkett, Henry, Scott,  
Bullock, Reisinger, Sneed, Cohen, Schleifer, Burnett, President Young

Introduced and read first time: April 24, 2017

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Public Works, Health Department,  
Department of Housing and Community Development, Commission on Sustainability, Baltimore  
City Public School System

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Moving Baltimore to Zero Waste**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Department of Public Works, the  
4 Health Department, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Office of Sustainability, the  
5 Department of Housing and Community Development, and other City agencies involved with  
6 waste reduction efforts in Baltimore appear before the City Council, along with experts on  
7 Zero Waste efforts nationwide, to discuss the development of a Zero Waste plan for  
8 Baltimore that will advance sustainability, public health, and job creation.

9 **Recitals**

10 Many of our most pressing environmental problems are, at heart, caused by waste and  
11 inefficiency in how we produce, distribute, and consume products. Eliminating or reducing this  
12 waste would yield huge dividends for our future. For example, waste-to-energy incinerators emit  
13 more CO2 per unit of electricity than coal plants, making products from recycled materials rather  
14 than new raw materials can cut energy use by as much as 95%, and recycling programs support 6  
15 to 10 times as many jobs as disposal efforts.

16 The closer we can get to eliminating waste, the greater the returns for our City, nation, and  
17 world. Zero Waste is an effort to maximize these returns by creating sustainable manufacturing  
18 and consumption cycles where all discarded materials can become resources for others to use.  
19 Communities throughout the United States, and around the world, have put together plans using  
20 Zero Waste principles that have achieved significant reductions in municipal waste, including the  
21 City of San Francisco's diversion of 80% of discarded material away from disposal.

22 Currently, the way we produce, consume, and dispose of our products and food accounts for  
23 42% of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions according to a recent study. Lowering these emissions  
24 is therefore essential to mitigating the effects of global warming that could be so devastating to  
25 the Earth, and especially to costal areas such as Baltimore. Cities applying Zero Waste principles  
26 can double their waste diversion rates in just a few years. Portland, Oregon, a city similar in  
27 population to Baltimore, calculated that their early waste diversion efforts reduced greenhouse  
28 gas emissions by the equivalent of taking more than 438,000 cars off the road each year. Similar  
29 results should be achievable here as well.

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

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1 Not only are the environmental benefits of Zero Waste efforts significant, they also produce  
2 significant economic gains. One study found that doubling the national recycling rate would  
3 create 1.5 million new well-paying, local, long-term jobs. By their nature, these jobs are  
4 overwhelmingly located in or near the communities increasing recycling.

5 Over time, Baltimore has made great strides in reducing its waste footprint and increasing  
6 recycling. But much more could be done, particularly in our handling of discarded food and  
7 other organic waste. Baltimore needs to develop an effective, long-term, plan to move toward  
8 Zero Waste to support the continued health, well-being, and prosperity of our residents.

9 Although all communities are different and require unique approaches, the successes of many  
10 other cities in these efforts have created a robust and well-understood roadmap that Baltimore  
11 can learn from in its own efforts. These successes should be studied throughout City government  
12 so that their lessons can be applied to create our own Zero Waste plan.

13 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
14 Council requests that representatives from the Department of Public Works, the Health  
15 Department, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Office of Sustainability, the Department of  
16 Housing and Community Development, and other City agencies involved with waste reduction  
17 efforts in Baltimore appear before it, along with experts on Zero Waste efforts nationwide, to  
18 discuss the development of a Zero Waste plan for Baltimore that will advance sustainability,  
19 public health, and job creation.

20 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
21 Director of Public Works, the Health Commissioner, the Acting Housing Commissioner, the  
22 CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, the Office of Sustainability's Sustainability Coordinator,  
23 and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.