

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 08-0070R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Rawlings-Blake, Councilmembers Middleton, Clarke, Young, Curran,
Reisinger, Branch, Cole, Henry, Kraft, Welch, Conaway, Holton
Introduced and read first time: October 6, 2008
Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

Committee Report: Favorable
Adopted: February 9, 2009

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Informational Hearing – Vector Control

FOR the purpose of requesting the Commissioner of the Health Department, the Director of the Bureau of Vector Control, and the members of the Interagency Sweep Team to brief the City Council on the effectiveness of Vector Control Bureau activity in controlling the rat population in City neighborhoods, the success of outreach efforts in enlisting the citizenry in rat eradication efforts, the methods used to measure the efficacy of rat control and abatement efforts, and the level of coordinated, rat-density based, interagency strategic coordination and application for long-term control of the rodent population.

Recitals

The Bureau of Vector Control (VC) of the Baltimore City Health Department “provides services to residents by inspecting and treating sites suspected of having rodent infestation. Inspection and treatment services are provided in response to complaints received at the City’s 311 Call Center or Baltimore CitiTrack Service Request System. They are implemented via strike teams that coordinate targeted neighborhood sweeps. These sweeps are the result of a series of assessments that include meetings with neighborhood residents and community leaders.

Neighborhood sweeps are performed under a comprehensive rodent control initiative known as the Interagency Sweep Team comprising (1) Vector Control of the Health Department, (2) Housing Inspection and Property Maintenance of the Department of Housing and Community Development, and (3) Sanitation Police of the Department of Public Work’s Bureau of Solid Waste . Under this dual track approach, personnel from Housing or Public Works clean properties that have become overgrown with high grass and weeds, are full of trash and debris, or littered with unused materials or abandoned vehicles prior to Vector Control’s treating and baiting activities.

The most common rodent in the City and surrounding suburbs is the Norway Rat, also know as the Brown Rat. The nearly 3 million rodents in Baltimore are known to destroy, contaminate or eat a wide range of perishables from pet food and fresh food scraps and can gain entrance to a building through any opening larger than ½ inch across. Having exhibited a preference for living underground in burrows made most often alongside building structures, fence lines, walkways, patios, sheds, and under low decks, the Brown Rats will jump up to 3 feet and climb to find food or shelter.

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

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1 Brown Rats typically live about 1 year, and females may have 4-7 litters of 6-12 young each
2 year, with a total of 30 young expected to live to maturity per year. This is of particular concern
3 for many reasons; most immediate is that rats are a major source of disease. In addition to
4 playing hosts to parasites such as lice, fleas, and ticks, rats are linked to the spread of a number
5 of infectious diseases. These diseases include: leptospirosis, toxoplasmosis, skin disorders, and
6 more familiar diseases such as rabies, salmonella, and bubonic and pneumonic plagues.

7 In addition to the deleterious affects on the health and welfare of the residents of the City,
8 rats are unwelcome and unsightly hosts to visitors and tourists. Further complicating the issue of
9 rodent control is the fact that the rat population in Baltimore City has not been formally counted
10 in over 50 years. At the introduction of City Council Resolution 07- 272 it was noted that
11 “Baltimoreans have waged a long, intractable war against rodents. In the interest of winning that
12 war, it is essential that the Council receive regular battlefield status reports from the VC agents
13 on the front lines.” If we are to continue to grow as a City, attract new residents, and encourage
14 citizens to invest where they live, it is imperative that we maintain our vigilance in controlling
15 the rat population and mitigation against the negative and unwanted affects of the rat population
16 in Baltimore City.

17 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
18 Commissioner of the Health Department, the Director of the Bureau of Vector Control, and the
19 members of the Interagency Sweep Team are requested to brief the City Council on the
20 effectiveness of Vector Control Bureau activity in controlling the rat population in City
21 neighborhoods, the success of outreach efforts in enlisting the citizenry in rat eradication efforts,
22 the methods used to measure the efficacy of rat control and abatement efforts, and the level of
23 coordinated, rat-density based, interagency strategic coordination and application for long-term
24 control of the rodent population.

25 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
26 Commissioner of Health, the Director of the Bureau of Vector Control, the Commissioner of
27 Housing and Community Development, and the Director of Public Works or their appropriate
28 designees, the organizations listed in the Planning Department Directory of Community
29 Associations, the Executive Director of the Baltimore Area Convention & Visitors Association,
30 the Executive Director of the Baltimore Convention Center, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison
31 to the City Council.