



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

Kevin Davis
Police Commissioner

March 9, 2016

Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Attention: Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

**Re: City Council Bill No. 15-0258R
Moving Dirt Bike Use Out of Neighborhoods and Into Dirt Bike Parks**

Dear Council President Young and Members of the City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD or the Department) has reviewed Council Bill 15-0258R. This resolution calls on representatives from various agencies and the community to join the City Council in a series of work sessions to create a viable plan for addressing dirt bike riding on City streets through the potential establishment of a dirt bike park. BPD welcomes the opportunity to discuss this challenging issue and potential solutions.

Baltimore is faced with many issues surrounding the illegal use of dirt bikes. Residents and drivers are threatened by dirt bike operators who often zoom around traffic on city streets while failing to observe any rules of the road. Such illegal operation of these vehicles creates a very serious personal safety risk to citizens and to the operators themselves. In 2015 alone, the City experienced three fatal accidents that resulted in the deaths of dirt bike operators. Unfortunately, BPD officers are left with few enforcement options other than to arrest operators. However, BPD has a "no-chase" policy with respect to dirt bike riders due to the inherent dangers such a chase would entail. Such a chase would create danger to citizens, our officers, and the operators of the dirt bikes, who often are not wearing helmets.

A few years ago, the City Council enacted regulations dealing with immobilizing and forfeiture of these vehicles. In addition to enforcement activities, seizure and forfeiture of dirt bikes or similar vehicles can be an effective tool against persons who violate the law. Despite these efforts, illegal dirt bike riding is a persistent issue. The BPD welcomes the opportunity to discuss how this issue can be addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. The Department looks forward to working with the City Council on this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew G. Vetter
Director of Government Affairs

Comments

