

**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL  
CHARTER REVIEW  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

**The Honorable Ryan Dorsey**

**CHAIR**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**6/10/2026**

**1:00pm**

**CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**26-0202**

*Charter Amendment*

*Department of Water and Wastewater*

# City Council Committees

## **BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS**

Danielle McCray - Chair  
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer – Vice Chair  
Sharon Green Middleton  
Paris Gray  
Antonio Glover

*Staff: Paroma Nandi  
(Paroma.Nandi@baltimorecity.gov)*

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Mark Conway - Chair  
Zac Blanchard – Vice Chair  
Danielle McCray  
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer  
Paris Gray  
Phylicia Porter  
Antonio Glover

*Staff: Anthony Leva  
(Anthony.Leva@baltimorecity.gov)*

## **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

James Torrence – Chair  
Odette Ramos – Vice Chair  
Zac Blanchard  
Jermaine Jones  
Antonio Glover

*Staff: Juliane Jemmott  
(Juliane.Jemmott@baltimorecity.gov)*

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT**

Phylicia Porter - Chair  
Mark Conway - Vice Chair  
Mark Parker  
Ryan Dorsey  
James Torrence  
John Bullock  
Odette Ramos

*Staff: Marguerite Currin  
(Marguertie.Currin@baltimorecity.gov)*

## **LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS**

Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer - Chair  
Antonio Glover – Vice Chair  
Ryan Dorsey  
Sharon Green Middleton  
Paris Gray

*Staff: Ethan Navarre  
(Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov)*

## **LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION**

Ryan Dorsey – Chair  
Sharon Green Middleton – Vice Chair  
Mark Parker  
Paris Gray  
John Bullock  
Phylicia Porter  
Zac Blanchard

*Staff: Anthony Leva  
(Anthony.Leva@baltimorecity.gov)*

## **LABOR AND WORKFORCE**

Jermaine Jones – Chair  
James Torrence – Vice Chair  
Danielle McCray  
Ryan Dorsey  
Phylicia Porter

*Staff: Paroma Nandi  
(Paroma.Nandi@baltimorecity.gov)*

## **EDUCATION, YOUTH AND OLDER ADULT**

John Bullock – Chair  
Mark Parker – Vice Chair  
Sharon Green Middleton  
James Torrence  
Zac Blanchard  
Jermaine Jones  
Odette Ramos

*Staff: Juliane Jemmott  
(Juliane.Jemmott@baltimorecity.gov)*

## **CHARTER REVIEW SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

Ryan Dorsey - Chair  
John Bullock - Vice Chair  
Zac Blanchard  
Jermaine Jones  
Odette Ramos

*Staff: Ethan Navarre (Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov)*

---

---

# CITY OF BALTIMORE

Brandon M. Scott – Mayor  
Zeke Cohen – Council President



## Office of Council Services

Nancy Mead – Director  
100 Holliday Street, Room 415  
Baltimore, MD 21202

---

---

## CHARTER REVIEW SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The Honorable Ryan Dorsey  
CHAIR

### Bill Hearing

26-0202

*Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater*

---

Sponsor: City Council President (Administration)

FOR THE PURPOSE OF 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.

---

### ***REPORTING AGENCIES***

- Department of Law
  - Department of Public Works
  - Department of Planning
  - Department of Finance
  - Office of the Comptroller
- 

### ***BACKGROUND***

Primarily, if enacted and approved by the qualified voters of the City, the bill would separate the Bureau of Water and Wastewater from the Department of Public Works (DPW) and establish the now-Bureau as a distinct Department of Water and Wastewater (DWW) with its own respective powers and duties. In addition, the bill would remove the existing requirement that the City Council affirmatively approve the creation of bureaus in DPW.

In addition to the powers and duties over water and wastewater which would be transferred from DPW to DWW, the bill also includes several prescriptive additions to the new Department's powers including:

- Requiring that the Department make charges for use and repair of the City's water and wastewater facilities;
- Providing for the protection of the City's water supply inside or outside of City limits by the Police Commissioner;
- Allowing the Director of the Department to shut off water for non-payment;

- Requiring the Director’s supervision on projects related to the construction or alteration of public works impacting the Department’s powers and duties; and,
- Providing the Department with the ability to correct or condemn properties that obstruct the Department’s carrying out of its duties.

Finally, in addition to those substantive changes, the bill would take effect on January 1, 2029.

---

***FISCAL NOTE***

If enacted and approved, the amendment itself includes no new express fiscal requirements for the City. However, the creation of a new and distinct Department may require additional funding beyond that which is currently required to operate the Bureau of Water and Wastewater within the Department of Public Works. For example, certain administrative expenditures may require duplication.

---

Analysis by: Ethan Navarre  
Analysis Date: 6/3/2026

Direct Inquiries to: [Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov)

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 26-0202  
(First Reader)**

---

Introduced by: The Council President

Cosponsored by: Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Gray, Bullock, Porter, Blanchard, Jones,  
and Ramos

At the request of: The Administration

Introduced and read first time: June 8, 2026

Assigned to: Charter Review Special Committee

---

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Department of  
Public Works, Office of the Comptroller, Department of Planning

---

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL concerning

2 **Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater**

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

9 BY proposing to amend

10 Article VII – Executive Departments  
11 Section 3  
12 Baltimore City Charter  
13 (1996 Edition)

14 BY proposing to repeal

15 Article VII – Executive Departments  
16 Sections 33 and 34  
17 Baltimore City Charter  
18 (1996 Edition)

19 BY restating, without amendment

20 Article VII – Executive Departments  
21 Sections 27 through 31  
22 Baltimore City Charter  
23 (1996 Edition)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.  
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

**Council Bill 26-0202**

1 BY proposing to renumber  
2 Article VII – Executive Departments  
3 Sections 35, 37, 41, and 42, respectively  
4 to be  
5 Sections 32, 33, 34, and 35, respectively  
6 Baltimore City Charter  
7 (1996 Edition)

8 BY proposing to add  
9 Article VII – Executive Departments  
10 Sections 148 through 152  
11 Baltimore City Charter  
12 (1996 Edition)

13 **SECTION 1. BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
14 City Charter is proposed to be amended to read as follows:

15 **Baltimore City Charter**

16 **Article VII. Executive Departments**

17 **§ 3. General provisions: Bureaus and divisions.**

18 (a) *Establishment or abolishment.*

19 [(1)] With the approval of the Board of Estimates, the City Administrator may establish  
20 and abolish bureaus and divisions within [that department, commission, or board.]  
21 ANY MUNICIPAL AGENCY.

22 [(2) Bureaus in the Department of Public Works shall be established or abolished from  
23 time to time by an ordinance which shall have been recommended to the City  
24 Council by the Board of Estimates and shall have been duly passed by the City  
25 Council by a majority vote of its members and shall have been approved by the  
26 Mayor.]

27 (b) *Allocation of powers and duties.*

28 Subject to the authority of the Board of Estimates, the City Administrator or the head of  
29 any [department, commission, or board] MUNICIPAL AGENCY may assign among the  
30 bureaus or divisions in that [department, commission, or board,] MUNICIPAL AGENCY,  
31 duties and powers of that [department, commission, or board.] MUNICIPAL AGENCY.  
32 A board or commission may act under this subsection only by the majority vote of its  
33 membership.

34 **§ 27. Department of Public Works: Established.**

35 There is a Department of Public Works, the head of which shall be the Director of Public  
36 Works.

**Council Bill 26-0202**

1 **§ 28. Department of Public Works: Director.**

2 (a) *Head of Department; Qualifications.*

3 The Director of Public Works shall supervise and direct the Department.

4 The Director shall have had substantial administrative experience in the construction and  
5 maintenance of public works, public improvements and the delivery of related public  
6 services or ten years experience as an engineer.

7 (b) *Appointment; Term.*

8 The Director shall be appointed, must be confirmed, and shall serve, pursuant to  
9 Article IV, Section 6.

10 (c) *Salary.*

11 The Director's salary shall be set in the Ordinance of Estimates.

12 **§ 29. Department of Public Works: Staff.**

13 (a) *Deputy; Other employees.*

14 The Director shall appoint a Deputy Director pursuant to this section and such employees  
15 as provided in the Ordinance of [Estimates, provided, however, that bureau heads in the  
16 Department of Public Works shall be appointed by the Mayor in the manner prescribed in  
17 Section 6 of Article IV and shall hold their offices as therein provided.] ESTIMATES.

18 (b) *Deputy as Acting Director.*

19 Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the office of Director or whenever the Director shall  
20 be incapacitated or otherwise unavailable for duty for any cause, the Deputy Director  
21 shall be the Acting Director, until the Director is again available for duty or the vacancy is  
22 filled.

23 **§ 30. Department of Public Works: Supervision of public works.**

24 The Director shall supervise all public works in Baltimore City or elsewhere, made by or for  
25 the City or any municipal agency, that relate to the Department's powers under this Charter.  
26 All plans and specifications for these public works, including those involving engineering  
27 questions, shall be submitted to the Director for approval.

28 **§ 31. Department of Public Works: Construction, maintenance, and repair.**

29 Unless otherwise provided by this Charter, the Department has charge of the construction,  
30 demolition, alteration, operation and maintenance of all public works that relate to the  
31 Department's powers under this Charter.

**Council Bill 26-0202**

1 **[§ 33. Department of Public Works: Water supply.]**

2 [The Department shall have charge of the water supply of the City and of all the properties,  
3 reservoirs, streams, pumping and filtration stations, pipes, apparatus and equipment  
4 appurtenant thereto and shall exercise all the powers and perform all the duties connected  
5 with the operation thereof and the supplying of water to the City.]

6 **[§ 34. Department of Public Works: Sewage.]**

7 [The Department shall have charge of the construction, operation and maintenance of all  
8 drains, sewers, and sewage disposal facilities, of the inspection or supervision of sewer or  
9 drain construction and repair work, and of waste disposal.]

10 **§ 32. [35.] Department of Public Works: [Street cleaning.] RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.**

11 The Department shall be responsible for cleaning the streets and for the collection, disposal  
12 and recycling of garbage, ashes, refuse, trash, and other waste matter, except as otherwise  
13 provided by law.

14 **§ 33. [37.] Department of Public Works: Testing.**

15 At the request of a municipal agency, the Department shall test materials and supplies  
16 purchased or used by the agency.

17 **§ 34. [41.] Department of Public Works: Correcting physical obstruction.**

18 (a) *Correction required.*

19 Any person who has, in, over, or under a public street in Baltimore City, any building,  
20 structure, conduit, drain, main, pipe, track, work, or other physical obstruction that blocks  
21 or impedes the work of the Department shall, on reasonable notice from the Department,  
22 promptly shift, adjust, or remove it, at that person's expense, to fully meet the exigencies  
23 described in the notice.

24 (b) *Condemnation.*

25 The City is empowered, when the exigencies of the Department's work require, to secure  
26 the condemnation of the physical obstruction as provided in Article II of this Charter.

27 **§ 35. [42.] Department of Public Works: Assistance to other agencies.**

28 On the request of the head of a municipal agency, the Director shall:

29 (1) supply estimates of the cost of work proposed to be done for that agency during the  
30 next fiscal year; and

31 (2) perform services for the municipal agency of the same general character as those  
32 carried on by the Department, the cost of which shall be charged to the agency  
33 requesting the services and shall be paid out of the funds appropriated to it.

**Council Bill 26-0202**

1    **§ 36. to 46. {Reserved}**

2    **§ 148. DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND WASTEWATER: ESTABLISHED.**

3           THERE IS A DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND WASTEWATER, THE HEAD OF WHICH SHALL BE THE  
4           DIRECTOR OF WATER AND WASTEWATER.

5    **§ 149. DIRECTOR OF WATER AND WASTEWATER.**

6           (A) *DUTIES; QUALIFICATIONS.*

7                   (1) THE DIRECTOR SHALL SUPERVISE AND DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT.

8                   (2) THE DIRECTOR SHALL HAVE SUBSTANTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE  
9                   CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC UTILITIES AND IN THE DELIVERY OF  
10                  RELATED PUBLIC SERVICES.

11          (B) *APPOINTMENT; TERM.*

12                  THE DIRECTOR SHALL BE APPOINTED, MUST BE CONFIRMED, AND SHALL SERVE, PURSUANT  
13                  TO ARTICLE IV, SECTION 6.

14          (C) *SALARY.*

15                  THE DIRECTOR’S SALARY SHALL BE SET IN THE ORDINANCE OF ESTIMATES.

16          (D) *EMPLOYEES.*

17                  THE DIRECTOR MAY APPOINT THE EMPLOYEES PROVIDED FOR IN THE ORDINANCE OF  
18                  ESTIMATES.

19    **§ 150. POWERS AND DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT.**

20          (A) *IN GENERAL.*

21                  NOTWITHSTANDING ANYTHING TO THE CONTRARY IN THIS CHARTER, THE DEPARTMENT  
22                  HAS THE POWERS AND DUTIES CONTAINED IN THIS SUBSECTION.

23          (B) *WATER SUPPLY.*

24                  THE DEPARTMENT SHALL HAVE CHARGE OF THE WATER SUPPLY OF THE CITY AND OF ALL  
25                  THE PROPERTIES, RESERVOIRS, STREAMS, PUMPING AND FILTRATION STATIONS, PIPES,  
26                  APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT APPURTENANT THERETO AND PERFORM ALL THE DUTIES  
27                  CONNECTED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE THEREOF AND  
28                  THE SUPPLYING OF WATER TO THE CITY.

**Council Bill 26-0202**

1 (C) *WASTEWATER.*

2 THE DEPARTMENT SHALL HAVE CHARGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION AND  
3 MAINTENANCE OF ALL SEWERS, AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL FACILITIES, OF THE INSPECTION OR  
4 SUPERVISION OF SEWER CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR WORK, AND OF WASTE DISPOSAL.

5 (D) *CONSUMPTION AND USE CHARGES.*

6 THE DEPARTMENT SHALL OPERATE, MAINTAIN, AND CONTROL A SYSTEM TO MAKE  
7 CHARGES FOR:

- 8 (1) THE CONSUMPTION OR USE OF THE CITY'S WATER SUPPLY;  
9 (2) THE USE OF THE CITY'S SEWERS AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES; AND  
10 (3) THE REGULATION, MAKING, OR REPAIRING OF PRIVATE WATER OR WASTEWATER  
11 WORKS.

12 (E) *ENFORCEMENT.*

13 (1) *PROTECTION OF THE CITY'S WATER SUPPLY.*

14 THE POLICE COMMISSIONER MAY APPOINT POLICE OFFICERS FOR THE PROTECTION OF  
15 THE CITY'S WATER SUPPLY WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE CITY LIMITS.

16 (2) *NON-PAYMENT.*

17 THE DIRECTOR MAY TAKE CERTAIN ACTIONS BECAUSE OF THE NONPAYMENT OF ANY  
18 FEE OR CHARGE FOR WATER SUPPLIED OR FOR WORK DONE IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
19 FURNISHING OF SUCH WATER OR THE DISPOSAL OF WASTEWATER UNTIL SUCH UNPAID  
20 FEE OR CHARGE IS FULLY PAID, INCLUDING:

- 21 (I) TURNING OFF AND DISCONTINUING THE SUPPLY OF WATER FURNISHED BY THE  
22 MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE TO ANY PERSON OR PROPERTY  
23 LOCATED IN OR OUTSIDE THE CITY OF BALTIMORE; AND  
24 (II) ESTABLISHING MEANS AND METHODS FOR ALTERNATIVE PAYMENTS.

25 (F) *ADDITIONAL POWERS AND DUTIES.*

26 THE DEPARTMENT HAS THE ADDITIONAL POWERS AND DUTIES AS ARE PRESCRIBED BY  
27 LAW.

28 **§ 151. CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR.**

- 29 (1) THE DIRECTOR SHALL SUPERVISE ALL PUBLIC WORKS IN BALTIMORE CITY OR ELSEWHERE,  
30 MADE BY OR FOR THE CITY OR ANY MUNICIPAL AGENCY, THAT RELATE TO THE  
31 DEPARTMENT'S POWERS AND DUTIES UNDER THIS CHARTER.

**Council Bill 26-0202**

1 (2) UNLESS OTHERWISE PROVIDED BY THIS CHARTER, THE DEPARTMENT HAS CHARGE OF THE  
2 CONSTRUCTION, DEMOLITION, ALTERATION, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL  
3 PUBLIC WORKS THAT RELATE TO THE DEPARTMENT’S POWERS UNDER THIS CHARTER.

4 (3) ALL PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THESE PUBLIC WORKS, INCLUDING THOSE INVOLVING  
5 ENGINEERING QUESTIONS, SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTOR FOR APPROVAL

6 **§ 152. CORRECTING PHYSICAL OBSTRUCTION.**

7 (A) *CORRECTION REQUIRED.*

8 ANY PERSON WHO HAS IN, OVER, OR UNDER A PUBLIC STREET IN BALTIMORE CITY, ANY  
9 BUILDING, STRUCTURE, CONDUIT, DRAIN, MAIN, PIPE, TRACK, WORK, OR OTHER PHYSICAL  
10 OBSTRUCTION THAT BLOCKS OR IMPEDES THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT SHALL, ON  
11 REASONABLE NOTICE FROM THE DEPARTMENT, PROMPTLY SHIFT, ADJUST, OR REMOVE IT,  
12 AT THAT PERSON’S EXPENSE, TO FULLY MEET THE EXIGENCIES DESCRIBED IN THE NOTICE.

13 (B) *CONDEMNATION.*

14 THE CITY IS EMPOWERED, WHEN THE EXIGENCIES OF THE DEPARTMENT'S WORK REQUIRE,  
15 TO SECURE THE CONDEMNATION OF THE PHYSICAL OBSTRUCTION AS PROVIDED IN ARTICLE  
16 II OF THIS CHARTER.

17 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That, if adopted by the voters, this proposed  
18 amendment to the City Charter shall become effective January 1, 2029.

19 **SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That this proposed amendment to the City  
20 Charter be submitted to the legal and qualified voters of Baltimore City, for adoption or rejection,  
21 in accordance with Article XI-A, § 5 of the Maryland Constitution, in the form specified by the  
22 City Solicitor.

# BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



## CHARTER REVIEW SPECIAL COMMITTEE

*26-0202*

*Charter Amendment*

*Department of Water and Wastewater*

## Agency Reports

---

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT  
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW  
EBONY THOMPSON  
CITY SOLICITOR  
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET  
SUITE 101, CITY HALL  
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

---

June 9, 2026

The Honorable President and Members  
of the Baltimore City Council  
Attn: Executive Secretary  
Room 409, City Hall  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 26-0202 – Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 26-0202 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill—entitled a resolution—would transfer duties related to the City’s water supply and sewers from the Department of Public Works (“DPW”) to a new Department of Water and Wastewater (“DWW”). The resolution establishes the DWW, provides for a Director of Water and Wastewater as its head, and details various duties of the new Department. These changes would take effect January 1, 2029.

Under Section 5 of Article XI-A of the Maryland Constitution, a resolution of the Mayor and City Council, such as this one, is an appropriate method of initiating an amendment to the Baltimore City Charter. If enacted, the resolution would be placed on the ballot at the City’s next general election and, if approved by the voters, the amendment would be adopted and become part of the Charter 30 days after the election. Md. Constit., Art. XI-A, § 5.

The Law Department can approve the bill for form and legal sufficiency. However, the Council may wish to consider the following points:

- 1) Whether it wishes to include a provision covering the appointment of a DWW Deputy Director and clarifying that the Deputy shall be the Acting Director upon the DWW Director’s unavailability; such a provision would mirror what currently exists for DPW in Section 29(a) and (b) of Article VII.
- 2) Whether removal of the word “drain” from proposed Section 150(c) is intentional, given that the term exists in current Section 34 of Article VII and is also included in Section (31) of Article II of the Charter (“Sewers”) and in relevant portions of Subtitle 20 of the Public Local Laws (“Sewers”).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey Hochstetler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Hochstetler  
Chief Solicitor

cc: Ebony Thompson, City Solicitor  
Nina Themlis, Mayor's Office of Government Relations  
Ty'lor Schnella, Mayor's Office of Government Relations  
Hilary Ruley, Chief Solicitor, General Counsel Division  
Ashlea Brown, Chief Solicitor  
Michelle Toth, Assistant Solicitor  
Desireé Luckey, Assistant Solicitor



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

---

**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.

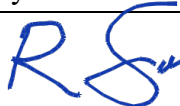
Establishing the BWW as an independent executive agency would allow DPW to focus on its core functions that include street sweeping, trash collection, and support services. The proposed realignment would enable each organization to operate with greater clarity, and the charter revision would reflect 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*



CITY OF BALTIMORE  
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

<b>TO</b>	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
<b>FROM</b>	Ren Southard, Acting Director, Department of Planning 
<b>DATE</b>	June 3, 2026
<b>SUBJECT</b>	City Council Bill #26-0202

**Position:** Favorable

**Summary of position:** The Department of Planning supports a favorable position on CCB #26-0202 - Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater which proposes separating the Department of Public Works Bureaus of Solid Waste and Water and Wastewater into independent agencies. The separation of the Bureaus of Solid Waste and Water and Wastewater into independent agencies allows the City the opportunity to modernize operations, improve financial performance, and better serve both City residents and regional stakeholders.

In the current capital budgeting process, the Department of Public Works submits capital improvement requests for the Bureau of Water and Wastewater and the Bureau of Solid Waste. In FY2027, the Department of Public Works recommended budget is \$486,163,781, which includes \$12,749,466 for the Bureau of Solid Waste and \$473,414,315 for the Bureau of Water and Wastewater. If the Department of Public Works and the Bureau of Water and Wastewater become independent agencies, the Department of Planning expects minimal changes to the capital budgeting process since both bureaus have independent budget lines within the capital budget. With this separation, the capital budget would include nine participating agencies, rather than eight. The independent bureaus would submit capital requests on behalf of their agency.

When considering this transition, the Department of Planning defers to the Department of Public Works as the lead agency for implementation. The Department of Planning stands ready to coordinate with the Department of Public Works on the development review process to minimize customer service interruptions.

**Fiscal Impact:** There is no expected fiscal impact on the capital budget.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Sara Paraniyam, Director, Capital Budgeting at [sara.paraniyam@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:sara.paraniyam@baltimorecity.gov).



CITY OF BALTIMORE  
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

<b>TO</b>	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
<b>FROM</b>	Bob Cename, Deputy Finance Director <i>BaltAC</i>
<b>DATE</b>	June 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2026
<b>SUBJECT</b>	26-0202 Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400

**Position: Supports**

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 26-0202, Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater, the purpose of which is to create a new Department of Water and Wastewater (DWW) as a separate executive department and transfers responsibility for the City’s water supply, sewer systems, and wastewater facilities from the Department of Public Works (DPW) to the new department. The DWW would oversee water and wastewater infrastructure, operations, maintenance, utility billing, and enforcement of water and wastewater charges that is currently overseen by DPW. If approved by Baltimore voters, the amendment would take effect on January 1, 2029.

**Background**

Historically, the Department of Public Works (DPW) included functions that are now administered by other agencies, such as the Departments of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Transportation (DOT), and General Services (DGS). These functions were established as separate departments through Charter amendments in 1968, 2004, and 2008, respectively. The proposed creation of a standalone Department of Water and Wastewater (DWW) is consistent with prior City efforts to separate major service functions into dedicated agencies with the intent of improving operational focus and service delivery.

Baltimore City currently owns and operates water and wastewater infrastructure that serves approximately 1.8 million residents in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and surrounding jurisdictions under a regional agreement dating back to 1972. In response to regional population growth and increasing system complexity, City and County officials initiated a comprehensive review of the shared utility systems in 2021. The Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force was established by State law in April 2023, to evaluate and recommend improvements to the governance of the region’s water and wastewater systems. In January 2024, the Task Force issued several recommendations to modernize the operations and oversight of the City’s water and wastewater utilities.

One of the Task Force's initial recommendations was for Baltimore City to study the potential separation of the Water and Wastewater Bureaus from the DPW and establish them as independent departments. This restructuring would enable more focused management of utility operations, which require specialized labor and distinct technical expertise. It would also streamline leadership structures, allowing for faster decision-

making across both utility and solid waste services, ultimately improving service delivery and operational efficiency.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The Department of Finance anticipates a fiscal impact from growth in administrative expenses due to separating the responsibilities of Water and Wastewater from DPW but cannot provide an exact estimate at this time.

### *Fiscal Analysis*

While some administrative functions currently exist within Service 670: Administration – Water/Wastewater, the creation of a standalone department may result in an increase in administrative and overhead costs associated with establishing independent executive, financial, human resources, legal, legislative and policy, and administrative functions that are centralized in Service 676: Administration - DPW. As a result, Finance anticipates an increase in administrative expenditures, though the magnitude of any increase would depend on the final organizational structure adopted during implementation. The City will consider these requirements with an eye to limiting additional costs, while ensuring effective and efficient operations and management of the new agencies.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed Charter amendment would establish a standalone Department of Water and Wastewater and is consistent with prior City efforts to separate major operational functions into dedicated agencies. While the Department of Finance anticipates an increase in administrative and overhead costs associated with creating a new agency, the Water and Wastewater Bureaus maintain many enterprise-specific operations that will facilitate the transition.

The proposal aligns with recommendations of the Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force and reflects governance structures commonly used by large regional water utilities throughout the country. A standalone agency would provide greater operational focus, financial transparency, workforce flexibility, and regional coordination. Although the long-term operational and financial benefits cannot be quantified at this time, the Department of Finance expects the immediate fiscal impact to an increase in administrative expenses.

**For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance supports City Council Bill 26-0202.**

cc: Michael Mocksten  
Nina Themelis



## MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the City Council  
c/o Shamoyia Gardiner, Deputy Chief of Staff, Council President's Office

From: KC Kelleher, Deputy Chief of Staff, Comptroller Henry

Date: June 9, 2026

Re: 26-0202 - Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater

---

### **Position: Favorable**

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.

The Office of the Comptroller supports this Charter Amendment establishing a Department of Water and Wastewater as a standalone City agency.

### **Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force**

From 2023 to 2024, Comptroller Bill Henry served as Chair of the Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force, which was established pursuant to State law to evaluate and recommend the governance model best suited for the Baltimore region's water and wastewater systems. Following seven public meetings, extensive stakeholder engagement, and analysis conducted by an independent consultant, the Task Force recommended as its first phase of implementation the establishment of a standalone Department of Water and Wastewater.

The Task Force concluded that separating water and wastewater functions from the Department of Public Works would provide a singular organizational focus on the operation, maintenance, capital investment, and service delivery responsibilities of the regional utility system. The recommendation recognized that an independent department would streamline decision-making, improve accountability, elevate leadership positions

necessary to attract and retain qualified personnel, and better align organizational structure with the scale and complexity of the system.

This recommendation is also consistent with practices employed by peer regional water utilities across the country, including those serving New York City, Atlanta, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Miami-Dade County.

### **Baltimore Regional Water Governance Model Work Group**

HB1509 established the **Baltimore Regional Water Governance Model Work Group (BRWGMWG)** to continue the work of the Task Force. As Chair of the Work Group, the Comptroller set up two committees to assist the Work Group in implementing its mission: Finance & Funding and Governance.

The Finance & Funding committee's goal is to support the Work Group in producing financial, funding, and customer-assistance recommendations for water, wastewater, and stormwater service across Baltimore City and Baltimore County. The Committee operates within the existing institutional framework established by the 1972 water and 1974 wastewater agreements and may recommend modifications or amendments to those agreements. The Committee's role is to clarify how the current system operates and recommend improvements that strengthen affordability, equity, transparency, and long-term financial sustainability.

The Governance committee's goal is to identify strategies that will improve how water, wastewater, and stormwater operations are managed within and between Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

As the Work Group continues its work, both committees will consider the proposed Charter Amendment to establish a Department of Water and Wastewater and incorporate its potential impacts into their recommendations.

### **Closing**

The proposed separation of Water and Wastewater from other Public Works functions represents a strategic opportunity to modernize utility operations and serve the Baltimore area with more focus. The **BRWGMWG** will support the City and County on strategies to coordinate under this new framework. By aligning governance structures with the unique demands of water and wastewater services, the City will set the utility for long-term sustainability and success.

**For these reasons, the Office of the Comptroller requests a favorable report on City Council Bill 26-0202.**

**CC:**

**Celeste Amato, Chief of Staff, Comptroller's Office**

# BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



## CHARTER REVIEW SPECIAL COMMITTEE

*26-0202*

*Charter Amendment*

*Department of Water and Wastewater*

# Additional Materials

DANA M. STEIN  
*Legislative District 11B*  
Baltimore County

Environment and Transportation  
Committee

Energy Subcommittee

*Chair*  
Environment Subcommittee

Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 301  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3527  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3527  
Dana.Stein@house.maryland.gov

## *The Maryland House of Delegates*

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

June 8, 2026

Baltimore City Council  
City Hall  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Council President and Members of the Baltimore City Council:

I'm writing in support of the proposed Charter Amendment establishing a Department of Water and Wastewater. As the sponsor of the legislation that established the Regional Water Governance Work Group and Chair of its Governance Committee, I have had the opportunity to work with utility experts, local government leaders, labor representatives, and community stakeholders to examine the future governance of Baltimore's water and wastewater system. The Work Group was created by the Maryland General Assembly to evaluate governance options and develop recommendations to strengthen the management and oversight of this critical regional asset.

The Work Group's discussions have highlighted the unique operational and infrastructure challenges Baltimore's public utilities are facing. Creating a dedicated Department of Water and Wastewater recognizes the complexities of these responsibilities and provides clearer accountability, which will allow for greater focus on maintaining safe, reliable, and affordable water and wastewater services for customers throughout the region. This Charter Amendment is a practical reform that will strengthen utility governance and ensure that Baltimore's water and wastewater system is positioned to overcome future challenges.

I respectfully urge the Council to support this Charter Amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Stein".

Delegate Dana Stein  
Maryland House of Delegates, District 11  
Chair, Governance Committee  
Regional Water Governance Work Group



#### COMMISSIONERS

Mark J. Smith, Chair  
Jonathan W. Powell, Vice Chair  
Lynnette D. Espy-Williams  
T. Eloise Foster  
Jeffrey M. Seltzer  
Regina Y. Speed-Bost

#### GENERAL MANAGER & CEO

Kishia L. Powell, P.E.

June 9, 2026

#### Position: Support

Dear Council President Cohen and Members of the Baltimore City Council:

I am writing in support of the **Resolution 26-0202 Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater**. As a member of the Regional Water Governance Work Group, established by the Maryland General Assembly for the purpose of evaluating governance options for the City of Baltimore's regional water and wastewater system, I have participated in meetings regarding the future governance, management, operations and maintenance of the system. Our focus as a work group has been the importance of ensuring that it remains accountable and in the best position to be responsive to customer needs with equity as an imperative.

Having served as Bureau Head of the City of Baltimore's Bureau of Water and Wastewater, I know first-hand the limitations and challenges the Bureau has experienced which are inherent in the current structure. This Resolution represents an essential step toward a structure that will achieve operational efficiencies for improved service delivery.

The City of Baltimore's Water and Wastewater enterprise represents the second largest utility in the state of Maryland, and among the 15 largest water utilities in the United States (out of more than 50,000 utilities); a stature that should be reflected in its structure. As a peer water utility, the Bureau of Water and Wastewater must address similar regulatory, operational and financial challenges including balancing affordability with making necessary investments in infrastructure and the workforce. The Work Group's discussions have highlighted these unique operational and infrastructure challenges that Baltimore's public utilities are facing.

Creating a dedicated Department of Water and Wastewater recognizes the complexities of these responsibilities and provides clearer accountability, which will allow for greater focus on maintaining safe, reliable, and affordable water and wastewater services for customers throughout the region. This Charter Amendment is a practical change that will strengthen utility governance and ensure that Baltimore's water and wastewater system is positioned to overcome future challenges.

I respectfully urge the Council to pass **Resolution 26-0202 Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater** on to the voters of Baltimore City.

Sincerely,

Kishia L. Powell, P.E.  
General Manager/CEO, WSSC Water  
Member, Regional Water Governance Work Group



Patrick Moran  
President

Cherrish Vick  
Secretary-Treasurer

Executive Vice-Presidents:

Mildred Womble  
Local 3655

Patrick Okafor  
Local 1678

Anissa Pierce-Sessoms  
Local 1081

Regional Vice-Presidents:

Bill Chenowith  
Central Region

Dorian Johnson  
Central Region

Debbie Michaels  
Central Region

Geron Mackall  
Central Region

Christine Duffy  
Eastern Region

Marcus Wilson  
Southern Region

Oluwadamilola Olaniyan  
Southern Region

Lori Ulrich  
Southern Region

John Feeley  
Western Region

Ginger Noble  
Western Region

Tony Sines  
Western Region

Unit Vice-Presidents:

Anthony Smith  
County

Rhonda Porter  
County

Debra Latson  
DHS

Denise Henderson  
DJS

Rowrite Stevens  
DPSCS

Saul Walker  
Higher Education

Bryan Epps  
K-12

Jenny Reese  
MDH

Wynton Johnson  
MDOT

Wonderful Page-McGlown  
MVA

Dorothy Bryant  
Municipal

Wendy Smith  
Municipal

Rayneika Robinson  
P&P

Timothy Walker  
SUPE

Trustees:

Jeff Fiory  
Local 1072

Pat Davis  
Local 3655

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

Position: Support

Dear Council President and Members of the Baltimore City Council:

I am writing in support of the **Resolution 26-0202 Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater**. As a member of the Regional Water Governance Work Group, established by the Maryland General Assembly to evaluate governance options for Baltimore’s regional water and wastewater system, I have been actively engaged in discussions about the system’s future. Throughout this process, a central priority has been ensuring that this utility remains public, accountable, and responsive to the needs of its customers; while also ensuring that the dedicated women and men who operate and maintain our water and wastewater systems are afforded with the working conditions and benefits they deserve.

Our work has underscored the unique operational and infrastructure challenges facing Baltimore’s water and wastewater system. Creating a dedicated Department of Water and Wastewater is a practical step toward addressing these complexities. By establishing clearer lines of responsibility and accountability, this structural change will strengthen oversight and allow for a more focused approach to delivering and maintaining safe, reliable, and affordable services across the region. This Charter Amendment represents a necessary governance reform that will better position Baltimore’s water system to meet current demands and future challenges.

I respectfully urge the Council to pass **Resolution 26-0202 Charter Amendment – Department of Water and Wastewater** on to the voters of Baltimore City.

Sincerely,

Patrick Moran  
President, AFSCME Maryland Council 3  
Member, Regional Water Governance Work Group