

**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

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Health Department, Department of Housing and
Community Development, Department of Public Works

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Vector Control**

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

10 **Recitals**

11 The Bureau of Vector Control (VC) of the Baltimore City Health Department “provides
12 services to residents by inspecting and treating sites suspected of having rodent infestation.
13 Inspection and treatment services are provided in response to complaints received at the City’s
14 311 Call Center or Baltimore CitiTrack Service Request System. They are implemented via
15 strike teams that coordinate targeted neighborhood sweeps. These sweeps are the result of a
16 series of assessments that include meetings with neighborhood residents and community leaders.

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

25 The most common rodent in the City and surrounding suburbs is the Norway Rat, also know
26 as the Brown Rat. The nearly 3 million rodents in Baltimore are known to destroy, contaminate
27 or eat a wide range of perishables from pet food and fresh food scraps and can gain entrance to a
28 building through any opening larger than ½ inch across. Having exhibited a preference for living
29 underground in burrows made most often alongside building structures, fence lines, walkways,

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

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1 patios, sheds, and under low decks, the Brown Rats will jump up to 3 feet and climb to find food
2 or shelter.

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

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

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

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