

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW

GEORGE A. NILSON, City Solicitor  
101 City Hall  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

June 1, 2010

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

Re: City Council Bill 10-0444 – Charter Amendment – Composition – Board  
of Estimates

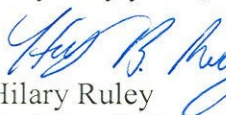
Dear President and City Council Members:

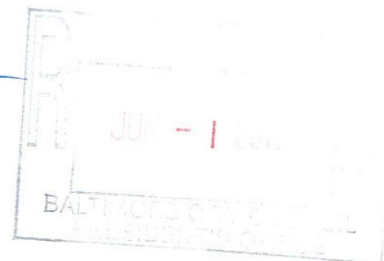
The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 10-0444 for form and legal sufficiency. It is a Resolution for the purpose of amending the Charter of Baltimore City to change the composition of the Baltimore City Board of Estimates. The amendment would remove the City Solicitor and the Director of Public Works from the Board, reducing the Board to three members: the Mayor, the City Council President and the Comptroller.

A review of the current provisions of the Charter makes clear that this bill is not consistent with the strong mayoral form of government that is the basis of the Baltimore City government under the Charter. Removing the City Solicitor and the Director of Public Works would have the effect of diluting the executive power. The current structure of the Board also provides stability to the City government and its financial health, which helps to maintain the City's bond rating. In 1993, the Charter Revision Commission noted that it had explored the possibility of changing the membership of the Board but ultimately found that the City Solicitor and the Director of Public Works both serve important roles on the Board and provide invaluable input as voting members.

The result of such a change in the structure of the Board of Estimates could lead to a less efficient and more costly government. However, since the bill is consistent with Article XI-A, §5 of the Maryland Constitution, which provides that a Charter amendment may be proposed by the Mayor and City Council, the Law Department approves City Council Bill 10-0444 for form and legal sufficiency.

Very truly yours,

  
Hilary Ruley  
Assistant Solicitor



*F/Comment*

cc: Honorable Councilmember Belinda Conaway, 7<sup>th</sup> District  
George Nilson, City Solicitor  
Angela C. Gibson, Mayor's Legislative Liaison  
Elena DiPietro, Chief Solicitor  
Ashlea Brown, Special Assistant Solicitor  
Terese Brown, Assistant Solicitor