



SHEILA DIXON
Mayor

BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



FREDERICK H. BEALEFELD, III
Police Commissioner

March 25, 2008

To: The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400 City Hall
100 N. Holiday Street
Attn. Karen Randle

From: James H. Green, Deputy Legal Counsel
Baltimore Police Department

Re: City Council Bill No. 08-0070-"Padlock Law"-Scope

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) supports the passage of City Council Bill No. 08-0070-"Padlock Law"-Scope which redefines "public nuisance" to require that there have been a certain number of offenses committed on or about a premises within a certain time period.

The BPD works closely with the Baltimore Housing Code Enforcement Legal Section's Property Based Crime Solution Program towards the goal of abating nuisances in Baltimore. There are a number of abatement remedies used through this partnership, including padlock, that can combat nuisance locations in our communities. On December 3, 2007, Mayor Sheila Dixon signed into law City Council Bill 07-0624 which made several changes to Article 19 § 43-Public Nuisances. The substance of the changes to the "Padlock Law" pertained to the definitions of public nuisance, enforcement, and procedures in conducting hearings under the section thereby allowing this to be another tool to address nuisance properties.

This proposed legislation clarifies the scope of the changes enacted in 2007 by requiring that certain thresholds are established before a determination of a public nuisance for a premise can be made. Specifically, the definition of "public nuisance" will require that there be a minimum of two (2) occasions within a twenty-four (24) month period where the premises was used for prohibited activities. This required timeframe will give the property owner and/or occupants adequate notice to remedy the nuisance and also help prioritize properties for enforcement.

We respectfully request a favorable report for City Council Bill No. 08-0070.

cc: Frederick Bealefeld, Police Commissioner, BPD
Karen Hornig, Chief of Legal Affairs, BPD
Angela Gibson, Mayor's Legislative Liaison
Sheryl Goldstein, MOCJ
James Kraft-Chair, Judiciary and Legislative Investigations

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