

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 15-0229R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Branch, Henry, Costello, Kraft, Welch, Clarke, Curran

Introduced and read first time: June 1, 2015

Assigned to: Labor Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Public Works

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Employee Listening Hearing – Department of Public Works**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting policymakers from the Department of Public Works to join
4 Councilmembers for a hearing to provide an opportunity for direct, unfiltered communication
5 from ground-level DPW employees.

6 **Recitals**

7
8 No City policy or endeavor can hope to succeed without the concerted effort of Baltimore
9 City’s dedicated public workers. They are the ones out on the front lines implementing policies,
10 putting plans into action, and directly seeing the results first-hand.

11 This gives them a unique and valuable perspective that can be a tremendous asset for
12 policymakers. Grassroots employees often have a clear view of the unintended consequences of
13 actions, or the unanticipated opportunities that developing situations create, that simply could not
14 be imagined during planning. But they do not always have a clear avenue to communicate these
15 insights to people empowered to act on them in a timely manner; or when such an avenue does
16 exist, their views can be inadvertently distorted as feedback travels up the chain of command.

17 Similarly, our hardworking, veteran employees sometimes encounter concerns and issues in
18 the workplace that undermine their ability to effectively perform their duties. But they are not
19 always aware of the proper channels to get these concerns addressed, or they may simply not
20 know the best way to communicate with anyone beyond their immediate supervisor.

21 Holding an open forum to allow employees to directly communicate with policymakers could
22 therefore be tremendously beneficial to both sides of this interaction. Policymakers would gain
23 an opportunity to listen to employee concerns, feedback, and insights directly and unfiltered;
24 while employees would have an opportunity to speak and know that they were in fact being heard
25 by people with the ability to act on their thoughts.

26 Ideally, all of our valued employees who have stuck with a career of public service through
27 these difficult times of continuous budget cuts and restructuring would have an opportunity to
28 present their ideas and concerns to their agency heads and other policymakers. In order to make
29 this ideal a reality, and ensure that all parts of City government can fully benefit from this type of

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

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1 communication, hearings should be held to accommodate listening events before the Council on
2 an agency by agency basis, starting with the largest agencies. Because of its size and complexity,
3 the Department of Public Works is the perfect candidate for the first of these listening events.

4 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
5 Council invites policymakers from the Department of Public Works to join Councilmembers for
6 a hearing to provide an opportunity for direct, unfiltered communication from ground-level DPW
7 employees.

8 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
9 Deputy Mayor for Operations, the Director of Public Works, the Head of the Department of
10 Public Works' Bureau of Solid Waste, the Head of the Department of Public Works' Bureau of
11 Water & Wastewater, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.