

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 16-0285R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Henry, Costello, Middleton, Stokes, Scott, Clarke, President Young, Councilmembers Mosby Curran, Holton, Reisinger, Branch, Welch, Kraft, Spector  
Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2016

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Public Works, Department of Transportation, Fire Department, Health Department, Baltimore City Public School System, Baltimore City Parking Authority Board, Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods, Police Department, Department of Housing and Community Development

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing - Response to the January 2016 Blizzard**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting representatives from the many City agencies involved in the  
4 response to the historic January 2016 blizzard to appear before the City Council to review the  
5 lessons learned from this crisis and to explore what best practices should guide the City's  
6 response to future storms of this magnitude.

7 **Recitals**

8 On the weekend of January 23, 2016, the City of Baltimore was hit by an historic blizzard.  
9 The more than two feet of snow that fell from Friday through Sunday shattered the previous City  
10 snowfall record and created an unprecedented natural emergency that effectively shut down the  
11 City and surrounding jurisdictions for days.

12 City government responded quickly and forcefully to this challenge. Phases I to III of the  
13 City's Snow Emergency Plan were instituted. Baltimore City truck drivers, police officers, and  
14 firefighters worked literally 24-7 during the crisis, allowing the City to keep basic necessities  
15 flowing and to respond to every call for emergency services from its citizens. Millions of City  
16 dollars were spent, thousands of pounds of salt were spread, and hundreds of pieces of equipment  
17 were kept in constant operation to alleviate the effects of this disaster. City plows and salt trucks  
18 drove more than tens of thousands of miles in their efforts to keep the streets as free of snow as  
19 possible.

20 Despite these impressive efforts and successes, many citizens felt that there were elements of  
21 the City's response that could have been improved upon. Procedures and equipment that have  
22 served Baltimore well in the past were tested in ways that they have not been in the past.  
23 Inevitably, some came up short of expectations.

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

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1 As part of its general oversight role, the City Council is responsible for reviewing the City's  
2 response to a crisis of this scale to determine what did and did not work, to review the effective  
3 use of the City's resources, and to determine how the City can better meet this sort of challenge  
4 in the future. Best practices in the following areas in particular should be explored:

- 5 ◆ Snow emergency routes;
- 6 ◆ Plow deployments and routes;
- 7 ◆ Plans for pedestrians and vehicles;
- 8 ◆ Access for oil and heating companies to deliver fuel; and
- 9 ◆ Responses to health and public safety emergencies.

10 In addition, there is a real need to explain how the order for clearing side streets is arrived at  
11 in a way that is intelligible to City residents. Many residents have been baffled by the decisions  
12 that clear some roads while leaving their own untouched for days. Limited plowing resources  
13 need to be used in an understandable and systematic manner so that residents can have some way  
14 of knowing when their streets may be cleared, why some streets have priority over others, and  
15 can set realistic expectations for when a particular street may be plowed.

16 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That  
17 representatives from the many City agencies involved in the response to the historic January  
18 2016 blizzard are requested to appear before the City Council to review the lessons learned from  
19 this crisis and to explore what best practices should guide the City's response to future storms of  
20 this magnitude.

21 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
22 Director of Public Works, the Director of Transportation, the Health Commissioner, the Fire  
23 Chief, the Police Commissioner, the Director and Chair of the Commission on Aging and  
24 Retirement Education, the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, the Director of the Mayor's  
25 Office of Neighborhoods, the Executive Director of the Parking Authority of Baltimore City, the  
26 Director of Emergency Management, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.