

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 20-0203R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke, President Scott, Councilmembers Bullock, Henry, Burnett, Cohen, Pinkett, Dorsey, Middleton, Sneed, Stokes, Costello, Schleifer

Introduced and read first time: March 9, 2020

Assigned to: Housing and Urban Affairs Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Public Works, Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Real Estate, City Solicitor

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Investigative Hearing – Vacant Structure Water Cut-Offs**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Department of Public Works, the
4 Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Department of Real Estate to
5 discuss the enforcement of existing City law requiring that water be cut-off to certain vacant
6 structures, what impediments stand in the way of better enforcement, and whether any
7 legislative action is necessary.

8 **Recitals**

9 Article 24, Section 2-3(b)(2) requires that the Department of Public Works cut-off water to
10 vacant structures in Baltimore that are in arrears with their water payments. The policy behind
11 this law is evident. There is no need to have running water to a property that no one lives in or
12 one that is otherwise inhabitable, and broken pipes and leaks that are ignored may greatly affect
13 neighboring properties where people do live.

14 Further, having running water to a vacant structure often adds to the fees that are owed on
15 that property. These added and unnecessary fees might serve as a deterrent to someone that is
16 otherwise willing to invest in that property to make it habitable and make it less of a blight on the
17 community.

18 The Council is aware that this law requiring water cut-offs to vacant structures in arrearage is
19 not being broadly enforced. Thus, the Council would like to have a discussion with the relevant
20 City agencies about what administrative impediments are standing in the way of proper
21 enforcement and whether any legislative fixes might be necessary.

22 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
23 Council invites representatives from the Department of Public Works, the Department of
24 Housing and Community Development, and the Department of Real Estate to discuss the
25 enforcement of existing City law requiring that water be cut-off to certain vacant structures, what
26 impediments stand in the way of better enforcement, and whether any legislative action is
27 necessary.

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

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1 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
2 Comptroller, the Director of the Department of Public Works, the Commissioner of Housing and
3 Community Development, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.