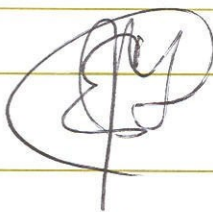



FROM	NAME & TITLE	Edward J. Gallagher, Director		CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Finance Room 454, City Hall (396-4676)			
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #08-0055 Charter Amendment –Sustainability Funds			

TO DATE: April 18, 2008

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
Room 400, City Hall

Attention: Ms. Karen Randle

City Council Bill #08-0055 has been introduced for the purpose of authorizing the establishment of one or more continuing, non-lapsing funds to be used for promoting sustainability and a clean and safe environment in the City and for related purposes. As this is a proposed amendment to the City Charter, it is required to be submitted for approval to the qualified voters of Baltimore City.

The proposed City Charter amendment mandates non-lapsing funding for purposes including administering the activities of a City office of sustainability, performing educational outreach on sustainability issues, providing assistance by loan, grant, or otherwise to individuals or organizations undertaking activities to promote sustainability, conducting research for the purpose of promoting sustainability, and funding related City programs. The bill states that the fund may comprise money appropriated in the annual Ordinance of Estimates, grants or donations made to the fund, and proceeds from fines, fees, and programs dedicated to the fund by ordinance.

The Department of Finance does not support Bill Number 08-0055 for two primary reasons. First, the designation of funds for a particular purpose, in this case to support sustainability efforts, limits the flexibility of current or future Administrations to allocate resources according to current priorities. The Department of Finance believes that decisions regarding the allocation of resources among priorities, including sustainability efforts, ought to be part of the annual budget planning process rather than adding language to the City charter or code to commit funds to one purpose or another for the present and years into the future. Second, to the extent this bill provides the City Council the authority to dedicate proceeds from fines, fees and programs to this fund by ordinance, this could potentially put the City's operating budget at risk during the course of a given fiscal year.

For these reasons, the Department of Finance opposes Bill Number 08-0055.

cc: Angela Gibson

