

Introduced by: Councilmember Sneed / *Henry Bullard Dorsey Skelley, Jr., Barnett*

Prepared by: Department of Legislative Reference

Date: January 9, 2019

Referred to: **RESOLUTION**

Committee

*Pinkett
Clarke
Middleton
Smith
P. S. Singer*

Also referred for recommendation and report to municipal agencies listed on reverse.

CITY COUNCIL 19-0126R

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

Request for State Action – Support for the Water Taxpayer Protection Act

FOR the purpose of requesting that the Maryland General Assembly pass the Water Taxpayer Protection Act to stop the practice of selling Baltimore City residential property and places of worship to enforce a lien for unpaid charges for water and sewer service.

*Maryland
Clarke
R. Johnson
[Signature]*

*[Signature]
Bill
Robert
[Signature]*

*Leon
[Signature]
[Signature]
Ed
[Signature]*

NO. _____

****The introduction of an Ordinance or Resolution by Councilmembers at the request of any person, firm or organization is a courtesy extended by the Councilmembers and not an indication of their position.**

Agencies

_____	Baltimore City Public School System
_____	Baltimore Development Corporation
_____	City Solicitor
_____	Comptroller's Office
_____	Department of Audits
_____	Department of Finance
_____	Department of General Services
_____	Department of Housing and Community Development
_____	Department of Human Resources
_____	Department of Planning
_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____
_____	Department of Public Works
_____	Department of Real Estate
_____	Department of Recreation and Parks
_____	Department of Transportation
_____	Fire Department
_____	Health Department
_____	Mayor's Office of Employment Development
_____	Mayor's Office of Human Services
_____	Mayor's Office of Information Technology
_____	Office of the Mayor
_____	Police Department
_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____
_____	Environmental Control Board
_____	Fire & Police Employees' Retirement System
_____	Labor Commissioner
_____	Parking Authority Board
_____	Planning Commission
_____	Wage Commission
_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____
_____	Board of Estimates
_____	Board of Ethics
_____	Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
_____	Comm. for Historical and Architectural Preservation
_____	Commission on Sustainability
_____	Employees' Retirement System
_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____

Boards and Commissions

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 19-0126R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Sneed, Henry, Bullock, Dorsey, Stokes, Cohen, Burnett, Pinkett,
Clarke, Middleton, Reisinger, Scott
Introduced and adopted: January 14, 2019

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Request for State Action – Support for the Water Taxpayer Protection Act

FOR the purpose of requesting that the Maryland General Assembly pass the Water Taxpayer Protection Act to stop the practice of selling Baltimore City residential property and places of worship to enforce a lien for unpaid charges for water and sewer service.

Recitals

WHEREAS, The Baltimore City Council desires to end the City practice of selling residential property and places of worship to enforce a lien for unpaid charges for water and sewer service;

WHEREAS, Legal advocates estimate that 70 to 80 % of properties sent to tax sale in Baltimore City include unpaid charges for water and sewer service in their outstanding charges;

WHEREAS, Tax sales over unpaid water and sewer bills disproportionately harm lower-income residents and people of color in Baltimore City;

WHEREAS, The Department of Public Works currently lacks a consistent, fair, and neutral process to resolve water billing problems prior to tax sale;

WHEREAS, At least 26 predominantly African American churches in Baltimore were sold at tax sale list from 2015 to 2017, many in part because of unpaid water bills;

WHEREAS, Home equity, which can be a senior's sole savings for retirement, can be lost at tax sale over an unpaid water bill that is as little as \$750 in Baltimore City;

WHEREAS, In December 2017, the Mayor ordered a temporary moratorium on tax sales of owner-occupied properties with water-only liens that removed 3,528 homes from the May 2018 tax sale list;

WHEREAS, The Bureau of Budget and Management Research found that the May 2018 tax sale collected \$606,000 more than the average collected in the last 12 years;

WHEREAS, The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, Maryland's largest water system, cannot use tax sale to collect unpaid water bills by State statute; and

WHEREAS, The Baltimore City Council finds that selling residential properties and places of worship to collect unpaid water bills is inappropriate and unnecessary;

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

Council Bill 19-0126R

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
2 Baltimore City Council requests that the Maryland General Assembly pass the Water Taxpayer
3 Protection Act to stop the practice of selling Baltimore City residential property and places of
4 worship to enforce a lien for unpaid charges for water and sewer service.

5 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Baltimore City
6 Delegation to the 2019 Maryland General Assembly, the Baltimore City Director of Government
7 Relations, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Baltimore City Council.

INTRODUCTORY*
CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL _____ R
(Resolution)

APPROVED FOR FORM STYLE, AND TECHNICAL SUFFICIENCY 1/8/19(ar) DEPT LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE

Introduced by: Councilmember Sneed

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

Request for State Action – Support for the Water Taxpayer Protection Act

FOR the purpose of requesting that the Maryland General Assembly pass the Water Taxpayer Protection Act to stop the practice of selling Baltimore City residential property and places of worship to enforce a lien for unpaid charges for water and sewer service.

Recitals

WHEREAS, The Baltimore City Council desires to end the City practice of selling residential property and places of worship to enforce a lien for unpaid charges for water and sewer service;

WHEREAS, Legal advocates estimate that 70 to 80 % of properties sent to tax sale in Baltimore City include unpaid charges for water and sewer service in their outstanding charges;

WHEREAS, Tax sales over unpaid water and sewer bills disproportionately harm lower-income residents and people of color in Baltimore City;

WHEREAS, The Department of Public Works currently lacks a consistent, fair, and neutral process to resolve water billing problems prior to tax sale;

WHEREAS, At least 26 predominantly African American churches in Baltimore were sold at tax sale list from 2015 to 2017, many in part because of unpaid water bills;

WHEREAS, Home equity, which can be a senior's sole savings for retirement, can be lost at tax sale over an unpaid water bill that is as little as \$750 in Baltimore City;

WHEREAS, In December 2017, the Mayor ordered a temporary moratorium on tax sales of owner-occupied properties with water-only liens that removed 3,528 homes from the May 2018 tax sale list;

WHEREAS, The Bureau of Budget and Management Research found that the May 2018 tax sale collected \$606,000 more than the average collected in the last 12 years;

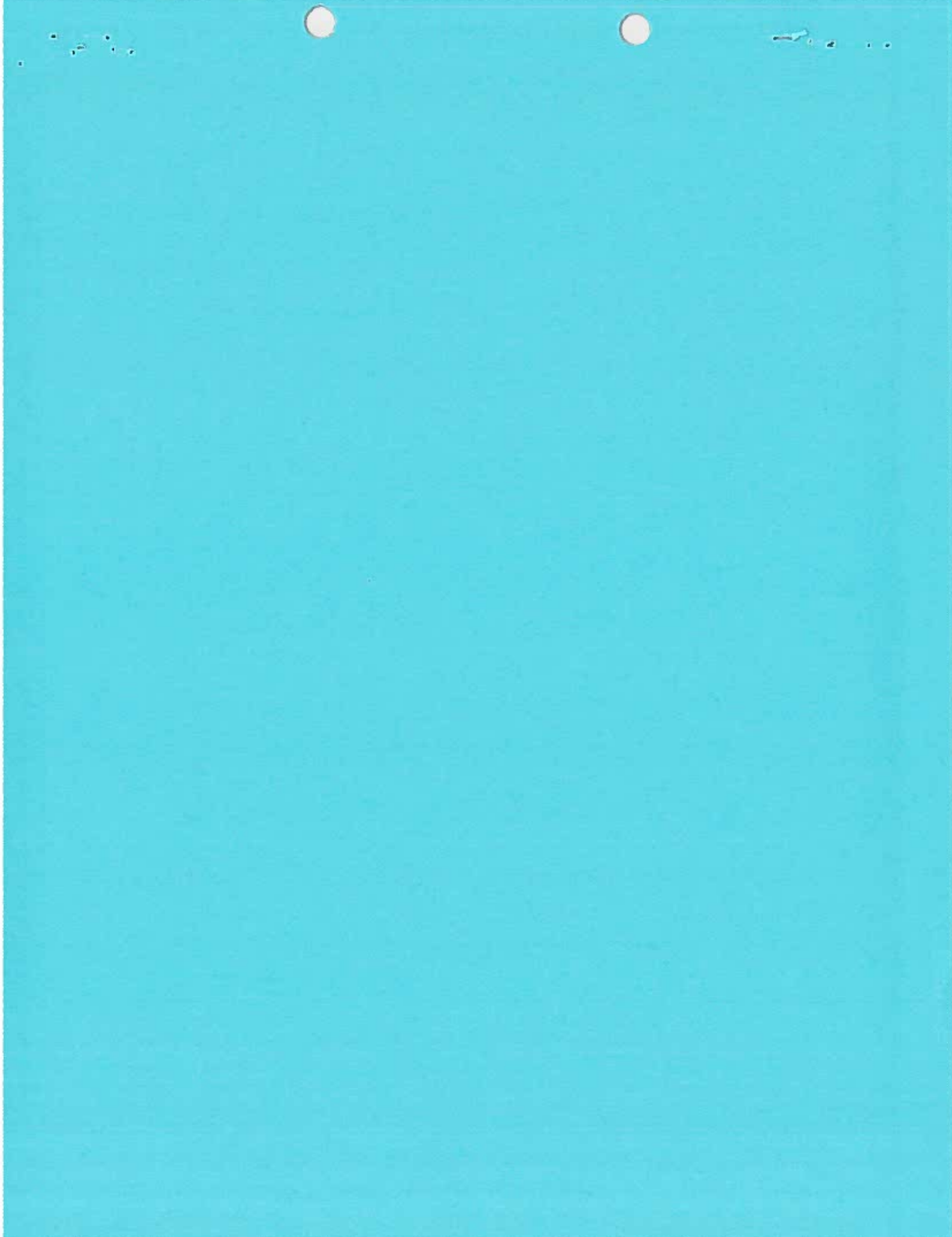
WHEREAS, The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, Maryland's largest water system, cannot use tax sale to collect unpaid water bills by State statute; and

* WARNING: THIS IS AN UNOFFICIAL, INTRODUCTORY COPY OF THE BILL.
THE OFFICIAL COPY CONSIDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL IS THE FIRST READER COPY.

WHEREAS, The Baltimore City Council finds that selling residential properties and places of worship to collect unpaid water bills is inappropriate and unnecessary;

NOW, TIHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Baltimore City Council requests that the Maryland General Assembly pass the Water Taxpayer Protection Act to stop the practice of selling Baltimore City residential property and places of worship to enforce a lien for unpaid charges for water and sewer service.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Baltimore City Delegation to the 2019 Maryland General Assembly, the Baltimore City Director of Government Relations, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Baltimore City Council.



ACTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL

JAN 14 2019
20

FIRST READING (INTRODUCTION) _____ 20 _____

PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON _____ 20 _____

COMMITTEE REPORT AS OF _____ 20 _____

_____ FAVORABLE _____ UNFAVORABLE _____ FAVORABLE AS AMENDED _____ WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION

Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

SECOND READING: The Council's action being favorable (unfavorable), this City Council bill was (was not) ordered printed for Third Reading on:

_____ 20 _____

_____ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING _____ 20 _____

_____ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING (ENROLLED) _____ 20 _____

_____ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING (RE-ENROLLED) _____ 20 _____

WITHDRAWAL _____ 20 _____

There being no objections to the request for withdrawal, it was so ordered that this City Council Ordinance be withdrawn from the files of the City Council.

President

Chief Clerk