

Council Bill 09-0127R

1 lots. Coupled with the reality that most metropolitan areas have multiple enforcement agencies
2 residing in overlapping and adjacent jurisdictions, hundreds of towing companies, and thousands
3 of property owners, locating a towed car can be a daunting, costly, and time-consuming task.”

4 “With the national average for recovering a towed car estimated at five to seven days with
5 vehicle abandonment rates greater than 25 percent, many vehicles are never recovered because
6 they cannot be found or the storage bill outweighs the value of the car. The result is that the
7 vehicle owner often walks . . . Cities and counties can benefit by providing better services to
8 their constituents by reducing the financial burden and emotional stress related to towing and
9 storage fees.”

10 The Economic Outlook contained in the Baltimore City *Fiscal 2010 Preliminary Budget*
11 *Plan* concludes, in part, that “the global economy is mired in the worst recession in at least a
12 generation, and Baltimore is feeling the effects . . . Foreclosure filings are on the rise. The more
13 than 4,000 filings in 2007 were the most since 2001. Preliminary data shows somewhat fewer
14 filings in 2008 - in part due to State law changes - but the City’s Department of Housing and
15 Community Development expects the number to grow in 2009 as the job market weakens and
16 hundreds more adjustable rate mortgages reset.”

17 “In 2008, losses on mortgage-backed securities froze credit markets and spread the economic
18 pain across virtually every sector. One result is rising unemployment. The U.S. economy lost
19 2.6 million jobs in 2008 and another 596,000 in January 2009. In Baltimore, the unemployment
20 rate jumped from 5.5% to 8.5% in 2008. The economic firm Sage Policy Group predicts that
21 Baltimore residents will suffer further job losses in the coming year due to cutbacks in the
22 construction and retail sectors. Baltimore is fortunate to have a concentration of jobs in health
23 services and education - two solid sectors - but many are filled by non-City residents.”

24 Before Baltimore City imposes the increase in towing fees on a public already financially at
25 risk, it is imperative that the full impact of the Department of Transportation proposal be
26 determined. The increase in fees must be evaluated in total – from winching or rollback service
27 to storage. Also it also must be confirmed that increases, in one case equal to 300%, are really
28 necessary to offset Departmental budget shortfalls.

29 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
30 Director of Transportation is requested to report to the City Council on the proposed increase in
31 towing fees; the rationale for the increase as based on fuel utility and operational costs; the
32 possible effect the increases will have on the general public’s ability to reclaim towed vehicles in
33 a timely fashion; and the possibility that the increases will result in an increase in the number of
34 vehicles that are abandoned in towing storage facilities.

35 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
36 Director of Transportation, the Director of Finance, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the
37 City Council.