

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 16-0299R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke, President Young, Councilmembers Branch, Scott, Stokes, Costello, Kraft, Henry, Reisinger, Middleton, Curran, Mosby, Spector, Welch, Holton

Introduced and read first time: April 7, 2016

Assigned to: Urban Affairs and Aging Committee

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Committee Report: Favorable

Adopted: May 16, 2016

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**A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING**

**Investigative Hearing – Fuel Fund of Maryland Local Partnerships**

FOR the purpose of calling on the Fuel Fund of Maryland to maintain its partnerships with non-profit agencies throughout Central Maryland, and especially in Baltimore City, to assist Baltimore’s most fragile population with preventing power terminations and securing power restorations; and inviting representatives of the Fuel Fund of Maryland, its local non-profit partners, and Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE) to appear before the Council to discuss how the City and BGE can help the Fuel Fund retain its ties with these partners and breathe new “energy” into a pre-eminent program adopted nationwide but requiring an infusion of renewed commitment here at home.

**Recitals**

The Fuel Fund of Maryland is a pre-eminent energy assistance program serving low-income families facing electricity turnoff or desperately trying to restore lost service to their homes.

Now throughout Central Maryland and even nationwide, the Fuel Fund was established as a non-profit organization in Baltimore City by then-City Councilwoman Victorine Q. Adams after two of her constituents froze to death in their home. It now serves more than 10,000 Maryland households with incomes limited to 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Since expanding, the Fund has relied on local non-profit agencies to handle requests for help, including the 40 West Referral & Assistance Center, the Franciscan Center, GEDCO, and the Hampden Family Center in Baltimore City.

These City Fuel Fund partners are joined by non-profit partners in Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Harford, and Howard counties in appealing for help to reverse a Fuel Fund of Maryland decision to eliminate all partnerships with local non-profit agencies and handle applications by the “remote control” of individual applications by phone and Internet.

Local agencies are currently paid \$22 a case to administer the program. Perhaps as a cost-saving measure, the Fuel Fund of Maryland will bring all functions in-house and use 211 or a single centralized operation to handle all requests, by phone and Internet only.

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

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1 Although hard-pressed to absorb the loss of Fuel Fund administrative support, local partners  
2 are most concerned about the Fund’s decision to eliminate its partnerships entirely with local  
3 hands-on agencies, thereby leaving our low-income applicants on their own to navigate the  
4 Energy Assistance and Fuel Fund systems without a case worker’s assistance.  
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6 Paid or not, our local agencies appeal to retain their key roles as working partners of the Fuel  
7 Fund of Maryland system on behalf of their clients.

8 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
9 Baltimore City Council calls upon the Fuel Fund of Maryland to maintain its partnerships with  
10 non-profit agencies throughout Central Maryland, and especially in Baltimore City, so as to  
11 maintain the case management and personal help required on a case-by-case basis to assist  
12 Baltimore’s most fragile population with preventing power terminations and securing power  
13 restorations.

14 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the Baltimore City Council invites representatives of  
15 the Fuel Fund of Maryland and its local non-profit partners to an oversight hearing to determine  
16 how best the City can help the Fuel Fund retain its ties with these partners.

17 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the Baltimore City Council also invites representatives  
18 from BGE to discuss how it can join us in enabling the Fuel Fund of Maryland and its local  
19 partners to overcome the projected disruption in local hands-on service, to meet the urgent need  
20 for adequate new formulas of financial support, and to breathe new “energy” into a pre-eminent  
21 program adopted nationwide but requiring an infusion of renewed commitment here at home.

22 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
23 Executive Director of the Fuel Fund of Maryland, the Chief Executive Officer of Baltimore Gas  
24 and Electric Company, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.