

Recitals

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

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

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

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council invites representatives from the Department of Public Works, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Department of Real Estate to discuss the enforcement of existing City law requiring that water be cut-off to certain vacant structures, what impediments stand in the way of better enforcement, and whether any legislative action is necessary.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Comptroller, the Director of the Department of Public Works, the Commissioner of Housing and Community Development, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.