



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Branch

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning **Informational Hearing - Fire Company Closures**

FOR the purpose of requesting that the Fire Chief appear before the Council to discuss the proposed permanent closures of 3 fire companies -Truck 10 in Harlem Park, Squad 11 in Hopkins Bayview, and Truck 15 in Broadway East - as well as any other proposed changes to the Baltimore Fire Department's deployment.

Recitals

In the preliminary budget plan recently presented for Fiscal Year 2013, the Administration was tasked with closing a gap of \$48 million between projected revenues and the cost of maintaining the current level of City services. One of the most substantial of the cuts it proposes to do so is a nearly \$8.8 million reduction in the budget for 'fire suppression and emergency rescue'. Much of this reduction would be achieved by permanently closing 3 fire companies.

The permanent closure of the 3 companies - Truck 10 in Harlem Park, Squad 11 in Hopkins Bayview, and Truck 15 in Broadway East - replaces the rotating closures of fire companies for financial reasons that have been in effect in one form or another since 2009. In announcing the permanent closures, the Administration has maintained that ending rotating closures through these permanent cuts reflects the reality of the City's changed economic outlook while providing needed certainty to all of the City's firefighters about which neighborhoods they are responsible for. This is intended to improve service and response times that lag slightly behind national standards, at least partially because of how the rotating closures have forced fire companies to operate outside of their regular coverage areas at times.

However, it is not clear what criteria were used to determine which companies to close, or how coverage areas will be changed to fill holes and improve response times. Besides the 3 companies slated for closure, 4 to 5 other companies reportedly may relocate to new stations in an effort to avoid closing fire stations or leaving coverage gaps, and some non-relocating companies may have their coverage areas adjusted. Despite these aspects of the Fire

Department's redeployment, the possible impact of moving dozens of firefighters from areas they are familiar with into fresh territories, and how coverage areas will be adjusted, has not been publically discussed.

Taken all together, many questions remain about the Fire Department's new deployment plan. In order for the public, and this Council, to properly evaluate the new plan these questions must be answered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council requests that the Fire Chief appear before it to discuss the proposed permanent closures of 3 fire companies -Truck 10 in Harlem Park, Squad 11 in Hopkins Bayview, and Truck 15 in Broadway East - as well as any other proposed changes to the Baltimore Fire Department's deployment.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Fire Chief, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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