



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Cole

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Erroneous Tax Sale Notices - Special Benefit District Property

FOR the purpose of requesting the Director of Finance and the Chief of the Bureau of Revenue Collections to report to the City Council at a public hearing on what caused many taxpayers to receive erroneous tax sale notices, and alley paving bills and what procedures can be put in place to avoid this situation in the future.

WHEREAS, In 2008, the Baltimore City Finance Department and the Baltimore City Council recognized that the City had failed to apply legitimate and documented property tax credits due to Benefit District property owners because of the Benefit District surtax related to their properties; and

WHEREAS, Finance applied such credits to all Special Benefit surtaxes in preparing tax bills for fiscal year 2009; and

WHEREAS, Due to computer cliches, hundreds of surtax payers were mistakenly mailed overdue tax notices, including property tax sale foreclosure warnings; and

WHEREAS, Some of these notices included alley paving charges there had been no prior notification of but that were being cited as a basis for sending the property to tax sale; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of those mistakenly receiving tax sale notices tried to call the phone number listed on their tax sale notices; and

WHEREAS, Many of these taxpayers reported "sitting on hold" for hours at a time, only finally to speak with a person who had no knowledge of the tax sale situation and who could not help; and

WHEREAS, The alley paving bill was included as part of the notice of the property tax sale, personnel at that number had no knowledge of the alley paving charge and the number they provided the taxpayer was not answered.

WHEREAS, The very owners who pay a Property TaxPlus have now experienced a lengthy "On Hold" response in seeking redress from tax sale mistakes by Baltimore City.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That Finance explain how these mistaken tax sale notices were generated and how the phone number listed for inquiry was inadequately staffed and briefed to handle such a deluge of calls.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Taxation, Finance and Economic Development Committee of the Baltimore City Council be requested to conduct a public hearing to determine how best we can avoid both improper tax sale notices and lengthy "on hold" waits to further avoid such instances.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Finance, the Chief of the Bureau of Revenue Collection, the Community Organizations of the Special Benefit Tax Districts, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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