



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: President Rawlings-Blake

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Razed and Vacant Houses - Notice to Disconnect Utilities

FOR the purpose of requesting the Commissioner of Housing, the Director of Construction and Demolition, the Director of Public Works, the Chief of the Bureau of Water and Waste Water Utility Billing Division, and the Senior Vice President, BGE Customer Relations & Account Services, to report to the City Council on the notification process for discontinuing utility services to properties that become vacant or are scheduled for demolition.

Recitals

The Construction and Demolition division of the Department of Housing each year oversees the demolition of more than 300 unsafe structures throughout the City. In addition, the Office condemns vacant and abandoned properties. The program demolishes properties in both a planned and emergency basis.

In order to provide for the shut-off of utilities in planned demolitions, Construction and Demolition officials monthly fax a list of properties slated to be razed to the Department of Public Works and BGE gas and electric utility divisions. In emergent situations direct contact is made with a 'point' person in each facility.

While the Department of Public Works and BGE have a streamlined process for ensuring shut-offs in emergency and planned situations, problems may arise if utility services have not been discontinued. Until the meter is removed, property owners incur quarterly maintenance charges, as they are responsible for any water that passes through the meter. These fees and any additional costs related to pilfered utility services or undetected water leaks could result in substantial bills for residents and the City.

In light of the current economy and budget constraints, an accurate and timely notification system for the discontinuance of utility services could mitigate the substantial fees associated with these services in vacant homes or properties scheduled for demolition. As important, this hearing would serve to educate the Council and the citizens about the role of utility service providers and property owners in this process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Commissioner the Commissioner of Housing, the Director of Construction and Demolition, the Director of Public Works, the Chief

of the Bureau of Water and Waste Water Utility Billing Division, and the Senior Vice President, BGE Customer Relations & Account Services report to the City Council on the notification process for discontinuing utility services to properties that become vacant or are scheduled for demolition.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That these entities form a coalition to ensure the timely distribution of utility discontinuation notices to property owners and report to the Council on the effect of these notices on these related fees

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Commissioner of Housing, the Director of Construction and Demolition, the Director of Public Works, the Chief of the Bureau of Water and Waste Water Utility Billing Division, the Senior Vice President, BGE Customer Relations & Account Services, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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