



# 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: Councilmember Henry

### A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

#### **Informational Hearing - Response to the January 2016 Blizzard**

FOR the purpose of requesting representatives from the many City agencies involved in the response to the historic January 2016 blizzard to appear before the City Council to review the lessons learned from this crisis and to explore what best practices should guide the City's response to future storms of this magnitude.

#### Recitals

On the weekend of January 23rd, 2016 the City of Baltimore was hit by an historic blizzard. The more than two feet that fell from Friday through Sunday shattered the previous City snowfall record and created an unprecedented natural emergency that effectively shut down the City and surrounding jurisdictions for days.

City government responded quickly and forcefully to this challenge. Phases I to III of the City's Snow Emergency Plan were instituted. Baltimore City truck drivers, police officers, and firefighters worked literally 24-7 during the crisis, allowing the City to keep basic necessities flowing and to respond to every call for emergency services from its citizens. Millions of City dollars were spent, thousands of pounds of salt were spread, and hundreds of pieces of equipment kept in constant operation to alleviate the effects of this disaster. City plows and salt trucks drove more tens of thousands of miles in their efforts to keep the streets as free of snow as possible.

Despite these impressive efforts and successes, many citizens felt that there were elements of the City's response that could have been improved upon. Procedures and equipment that have served Baltimore well in the past were tested in ways that they have not been in the past. Inevitably, some came up short of expectations.

As part of its general oversight role, the City Council is responsible for reviewing the City's response to a crisis of this scale to determine what did and did not work, to review the effective use

of the City's resources, and to determine how the City can better meet this sort of challenge in the future. Best practices in the following areas in particular should be explored:

- \* Snow emergency routes;
- \* Plow deployments and routes;
  
- \* Plans for pedestrians and vehicles;
- \* Access for oil and heating companies to deliver fuel; and
- \* Responses to health and public safety emergencies.

In addition, there is a real need to explain how the order for clearing side streets is arrived at in a way that is intelligible to City residents. Many residents have been baffled by the decisions that clear some roads while leaving their own untouched for days. Limited plowing resources need to be used in an understandable and systematic manner so that residents can have some way of knowing when their streets may be cleared, why some streets have priority over others, and can set realistic expectations for when a particular street may be plowed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That representatives from the many City agencies involved in the response to the historic January 2016 blizzard are requested to appear before the City Council to review the lessons learned from this crisis and to explore what best practices should guide the City's response to future storms of this magnitude.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Public Works, the Director of Transportation, the Health Commissioner, the Fire Chief, the Police Commissioner, the Director and Chair of the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education, the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods, the Executive Director of the Parking Authority of Baltimore City, the Director of Emergency Management, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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