



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
Investigative Hearing - Decommissioning, Dismantling, and Closure of Hazardous Material Sites within Baltimore City

FOR the purpose of requesting the Baltimore City Fire Chief, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner, and the Baltimore City Housing Commissioner to present the inter-agency coordinated process regarding the identification, decommissioning, dismantling and/or closure of facilities where hazardous materials were produced or used in the manufacturing process; ascertaining the specific responsibilities assigned to each agency and identifying programmatic and authoritative overlap; and making certain that the Baltimore City government response to hazardous material handling, disposal, and containment of buildings with a history of hazardous material is sufficient to protect the lives and property of citizens, workers, and visitors in Baltimore City.

Recitals

Alarge part of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency’s mission to protect human health and environment is accomplished by regulating and encouraging that contaminated land in urban centers be secured and revitalized for use as safe and productive economic and/or green space. Securing, cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties with a hazardous material history is imperative to the healthy development of American cities. However, owing to Baltimore’s history as an industrial city, the call for identifying and decommissioning these buildings takes on an enhanced importance and urgency.

In a February 2008, before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, a Councilman from Cleveland, Ohio, presenting the position of the National League of Cities on Brownfields redevelopment issues, presented testimony that: “As an older industrial City, Cleveland’s legacy of manufacturing and commerce is now symbolized by numerous abandoned structures, obsolete buildings, leaking underground storage tanks and polluted properties. The impact of our industrial legacy has spread across our neighborhoods like cancer, killing once vibrant areas and leaving behind dead zones”.

A 2003 report, Industrial Land Use Analysis, City of Baltimore, Maryland, prepared for Baltimore Development Corporation by Bay Area Economics notes that construction in the city is “constrained by limitations on reuse of contaminated, brownfield sites. Because much of Baltimore’s industrial land has been in industrial use for many

years, it is constrained by real contamination and the perception that it might be contaminated.” A recent example of the impact of hazardous material production on the City is present in the restriction of residential construction to only the easternmost third of the Harborpoint development site due to past use as a chromium production plant

Public concern about the health effects from hazardous chemicals, stricter environmental regulations, and opportunities to enhance current or outdated uses make it essential that Baltimore City develop a comprehensive approach to the decommissioning, or converting from original use, of brownfield buildings and land. In addition, given Baltimore’s long industrial history and the fact that companies and factories were not required by law to report their hazardous material inventories until 1987, the potential for accidents that could adversely affect the health and welfare of Baltimore citizenry requires action.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Baltimore City Fire Chief, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner, and the Baltimore City Housing Commissioner are requested to present the inter-agency coordinated process regarding the identification, decommissioning, dismantling and/or closure of facilities where hazardous materials were produced or used in the manufacturing process; ascertaining the specific responsibilities assigned to each agency and identifying programmatic and authoritative overlap; and making certain that the Baltimore City government response to hazardous material handling, disposal, and containment of buildings with a history of hazardous material is sufficient to protect the lives and property of citizens, workers, and visitors in Baltimore City.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Baltimore City Fire Chief, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner, the Baltimore City Housing Commissioner, the Planning Director, the President of the Baltimore Development Corporation, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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