



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: President Young

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
In Support of State Action - Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing

FOR the purpose of supporting adoption of House Bill 1067, or similar legislation, to align Maryland lead poisoning prevention policies with CDC recommendations, and urging the Health Department and the Department of Housing and Community Development to improve their coordination in order to maximize the effectiveness of both current lead poisoning prevention efforts and the improvement of efforts that passage of House Bill 1067 would allow.

Recitals

Lead poisoning has been a scourge afflicting Baltimore's children for far too long. Although concerted efforts to address lead poisoning throughout Maryland have made dramatic progress in reducing its occurrence over the last 2 decades, it remains far too common - and disproportionately impacts low income urban communities concentrated in older housing units such as many in Baltimore.

The only truly effective intervention against lead poisoning is prevention. Recognizing this, the CDC recommends that public health actions be initiated at relatively low levels of exposure in order to minimize the potential for lead to build up in people's systems over time. They recommend intervention when as little as 5 micrograms of lead are detected per deciliter of a child or pregnant woman's blood. This standard is half the level at which Maryland law currently requires actions to be taken.

House Bill 1067, currently pending before the General Assembly, would lower the actionable level of lead under Maryland law from 10 to 5 micrograms per deciliter, in line with the CDC recommendations. Adopting this standard would encourage or require lead hazard reduction in many more structures, and therefore prevent, or at least mitigate, countless cases of lead poisoning. Instead of waiting until a child reaches a higher lead poisoning level of 10 micrograms per deciliter, HB1067 triggers environmental intervention at lower levels to prevent children from reaching higher lead poisoning levels that may cause additional permanent damage. We therefore strongly urge that Maryland adopt the 5 microgram standard.

Here in Baltimore, getting the most benefit from any new standard, as well as existing programs, requires that all City agencies work together cooperatively toward our shared goal of eliminating lead poisoning. We therefore also call on the Health Department to take a more proactive approach toward lead poisoning prevention, especially in relation to lead hazard reduction and home renovation, by improving coordination with the Department of Housing and Community Development and community-based partners. We also encourage the Health Department to undertake a public awareness campaign to make citizens aware of the new CDC guidelines.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council supports adoption of House Bill 1067, or similar legislation, to align Maryland lead poisoning prevention policies with CDC recommendations, and urging the Health Department and the Department of Housing and Community Development to improve their coordination in order to maximize the effectiveness of both current lead poisoning prevention efforts and the improvement of efforts that passage of House Bill 1067 would allow.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House Speaker, the Mayor, the Housing Commissioner, the Health Commissioner, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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