



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Stokes

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning **Investigative Hearing - Costs of the Speed and Red Light Camera Program Failures**

FOR the purpose of calling on representatives from the Finance Department, the Law Department, the Department of Transportation, and all other agencies involved with the City's speed and red-light camera programs, to appear before the Council to thoroughly discuss the serious problems with these programs and the full past, and likely future, costs to the City of the failed camera programs.

Recitals

Baltimore's red-light and speed camera programs have been troubled for some time. High error rates, software problems, and vendor failures have kept the programs from operating as intended for months, costing the City millions in lost revenue and unplanned expenditures. Especially troubling are media reports that internally commissioned audits and reviews of the programs have found unacceptably high error rates in the cameras when they were operating - potentially resulting in thousands of improperly issued tickets that may have cost city drivers millions of dollars in unwarranted fines.

The failure of the Administration to fully disclose what it knew about the problems with the camera programs, and when it became aware of the extent of the problems, has been a serious blow to government transparency and our citizens' faith in their government. This unwillingness to come clean about the extent of the problem has also made it impossible to gauge the full costs of these programs to the City, and has opened the City up to potentially vast liability if large numbers of people who have paid questionable camera-generated fines demand refunds.

Immediate action must be taken to restore Baltimoreans' trust in their government, and begin to get a handle on the true likely costs of the camera programs' failure. An open and thorough investigation is needed to ensure that the public is made aware of exactly what went wrong and how future mistakes can be prevented. The actual past, and expected future, costs of these errors must also be brought to light so that their impacts on the City's finances can be assessed and accurately accounted for in future planning.

Hearings before the City Council, in the full light of day where all relevant parties can be heard, are the most effective way to find these needed answers and get to the bottom of Baltimore's failed camera programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls on representatives from the Finance Department, the Law Department, the Department of Transportation, and all other agencies involved with the City's speed and red-light camera programs, to appear before it to thoroughly discuss the serious problems with these programs and the full past, and likely future, costs to the City of the failed camera programs.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Finance Director, the City Solicitor, the Director of Transportation, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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