



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Type:	City Council Resolution	Status:	Adopted		
File created:	4/7/2016	In control:	Judiciary and Legislative Investigations		
On agenda:		Final action:	5/2/2016		
Enactment date:		Enactment #:			
Title:	Informational Hearing - Water Bill Increases FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Water Billing Department in the Department of Public Works and the Department of Finance appear before the Council to discuss the recent increase in water bills received by residents since the installation of the BaltiMeter system, the reasoning behind these unexpected increases, and steps to assist residents with unaffordable bills.				
Sponsors:	James B. Kraft, President Young, Warren Branch, Brandon M. Scott, Carl Stokes, Eric T. Costello, Bill Henry, Edward Reisinger, Mary Pat Clarke, Sharon Green Middleton, Robert Curran, Helen L. Holton, Nick Mosby, William "Pete" Welch				
Indexes:	Increases, Informational Hearing, Water Bills				
Code sections:					
Attachments:	1. 16-0298R~1st Reader, 2. DPW 16-0298R, 3. Finance 16-0289R, 4. 16-0298R~2nd Reader				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/2/2016	0	City Council	Adopted	
5/2/2016	0	Judiciary and Legislative Investigations	Recommended Favorably	
4/20/2016	0	Judiciary and Legislative Investigations	Recommended Favorably	Pass
4/11/2016	0	The City Council	Refer to Dept. of Public Works	
4/11/2016	0	The City Council	Refer to Dept. of Finance	
4/7/2016	0	City Council	Assigned	
4/7/2016	0	City Council	Introduced	
4/7/2016	0	Judiciary and Legislative Investigations	Scheduled for a Public Hearing	

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Kraft

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - Water Bill Increases

FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Water Billing Department in the Department of Public Works and the Department of Finance appear before the Council to discuss the recent increase in water bills received by residents since the installation of the BaltiMeter system, the reasoning behind these unexpected increases, and steps to assist residents with unaffordable bills.

Recitals

Last year, the Department of Public Works installed a new water meter system in residential properties throughout Baltimore City. These meters were described as much more accurate than the old system. They are digitized and can be read remotely by the Water Billing Department. Previously, the meters had to be read manually, approximately every 3 months. Oftentimes the consumption was estimated, and the consumer/resident would receive a minimum bill payment. This would amount to about \$130 (including Stormwater fee and Bay Restoration Fee) four times a year for a rowhome with 2-4 residents.

After the installation of the new water meters, there was a delay in the billing cycle. This has resulted in many residents receiving bills for 120 ♦ 250 days of consumption. This alone has caused the bill amount to be much higher. It is understandable that in some cases the average daily consumption has not changed, but due to the increase in number of days, the total bill has increased. This usually would have been paid over two or three billing periods. Now, residents are being burdened with paying two or three times as much at one time.

In other cases, residents are now being charged for water that was used in the past but not paid for sufficiently. Those previously estimated bills are now showing up in the form of current consumption readings that are exorbitantly high. The residents are further being burdened by past errors that were out of their control.

Despite all this, when residents are afforded the opportunity to appear for an ♦informal conference,♦ they are receiving the unfortunate news that nothing can be done to adjust their bill. They are told that the bill is accurate and it must be paid.

The Council recognizes that a fair fee must be paid in order to maintain, repair, and improve the water and wastewater system throughout the City. However, the sudden, drastic, and incomprehensible increase in bills must be reasonably detailed for the residents to understand past and present consumption. Additionally, residents ought to be given a payment plan option if bills are higher than past average usage. All of these concerns must be addressed in a timely manner.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council requests that representatives from the Water Billing Department in the Department of Public Works and the Department of Finance appear before it to discuss the recent increase in water bills received by residents since the installation of the BaltiMeter system, the reasoning behind these unexpected bills, and steps to assist the residents with unaffordable bills.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Public Works, the Head of the Department of Public Works♦ Bureau of Water and

Wastewater, the Finance Director, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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