



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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*** Warning:** This is an unofficial, introductory copy of the bill.
The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Dorsey

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

Informational Hearing - Baltimore Metropolitan Drinking Supply

For the purpose of investigating the quality of source water for the Baltimore Metropolitan drinking supply, the impacts of activities and land uses at City-owned reservoir lands and throughout their watersheds, costs associated with such activities and land uses; and calling on representatives of the Department of Public Works, the Environmental Police, the Department of Real Estate, the Office of Sustainability, the Department of Transportation, the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to report on such concerns.

Recitals

Baltimore City gets its drinking water from three reservoirs and their respective watersheds, and shares the supply with Baltimore, Howard, Harford, Carroll, and Anne Arundel Counties. The Director of the Baltimore City Department of Public Works is responsible for adopting and enforcing rules and regulations governing the protection of the City's water supply and facilities. In 2005, the City and surrounding Counties agreed to ensure that the three reservoirs and their respective watersheds provide high quality raw water for the water-supply system and support environmental and aesthetic initiatives, as well as beneficial recreational uses, for surface water.

Inevitably, each of the Baltimore region's reservoir watersheds is impaired by pollutants. These pollutants, which are sometimes introduced into the water via land use activities, make water treatment costs rise. Water rates for Baltimore City residents have increased in recent years, which has made the cost of drinking water prohibitive for low income residents. In coming decades prices could rise even higher, and the purity of the drinking water supply could be compromised, as the effects of climate change increasingly strain the reservoir's infrastructure.

Improper land use, including the removal of natural buffer zones around the reservoirs, endangers the future of Baltimore City's water supply. The City Council would like to collect information on land use and their impact on water quality from the Department of Public Works, the Environmental Police, the Department of Real Estate, the Office of Sustainability, the Department of Transportation, the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. Specifically, the City Council would like these groups to report on:

- leasing contracts for City property at reservoirs with non-City agencies/entities;
- right of entry and recreational permits at reservoirs;
- the impacts of the Pine Ridge Golf Course, the Baltimore County Police training range, the Loch Raven skeet and trap center, and the Loch Raven Fishing Center;
- the impacts of recreational activity generally;
- mowing and other maintenance performed by Baltimore City employees or contractors that is not strictly for public safety purposes or resource management access;
- the impact of land use change and forest loss in reservoir watersheds;
- risks posed by extreme weather and climate change;
- how often algae blooms, fish kills, turbidity and other irregular and detrimental events occur, as well as where public information about these events can be found, how this information is being used to protect our water source, and whether this information is being used to determine upgrades to green and/or gray infrastructure; and
- any other matter concerning source water quality impacts or adjacent uses.

The groups should also report on measures being taken to protect the source of our drinking water and to limit the expense and dangers of chemical water treatment to Baltimore City water consumers, including information regarding:

- all leases and agreements concerning development within the Baltimore City Water Quality Management Areas to include all environmental and financial costs;
- the status of instituting recommendations from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' 2004 Reservoir Forest Study;
- whether the level of cooperation between the signors of the 2005 Reservoir Management Agreement meets the required level of cooperation mandated in the Agreement;
- progress in meeting the established Total Maximum Daily Loads for Maryland 303(d) listed impairments to water quality in each of the three reservoirs and their contributing tributaries;
- the Baltimore Environmental Police's operations, observations, recent successes, and areas for improvement; and
- policies and procedures to identify and mitigate threats to Baltimore City water consumers from environmental hazards within its watershed.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the City Council investigates the quality of source water for the Baltimore Metropolitan drinking supply, the impacts of activities and land uses at City-owned reservoir lands and throughout their watersheds, costs associated with such activities and land uses; and in doing so, calls on the Department of Public Works, the Environmental Police, the Department of Real Estate, the Office of Sustainability, the Department of Transportation, the Mayor's Office of Emergency

Management, and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to report on such concerns.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Department of Public Works Director, the Baltimore Environmental Police Chief, the Baltimore City Real Estate Officer, the Director of Sustainability, the Director of Transportation, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, the Chairman of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.