



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke and Councilmember Reisinger
A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

Baltimore's Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste: 2020-2040 and Beyond

For the purpose of calling on the Mayor, the Board of Estimates, and all affected City agencies to formally acknowledge and move forward in implementing the "Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste."

Recitals

On February 22, 2020, United Workers, joined by their contractor, Zero Waste Associates; the President, the Vice President, and other members of the Baltimore City Council; and by advocates from across the City, especially from those Southwest Baltimore neighborhoods most negatively affected by the pollution of incineration and those most active in demanding significant and timely detoxification of the air we breathe and the land we cherish presented Baltimore's "Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste" (the "Plan").

By this Resolution, these parties are now calling for partnership and approval of this Plan's spirit and specifics by the Mayor and City Council, the Board of Estimates, Sustainability Commission, and the Department of Public Works. The United Workers and the City Council have arrived at this decisive Resolution after 3 years of intense discussions, hearings, research, and ground-laying legislation.

On April 24, 2017, the City Council held its first hearing on "Moving Baltimore to Zero Waste" that brought together multiple City agencies to launch coordinated plans to advance a holistic Zero Waste plan with sustainability, public health, and job creation as crucial components.

In 2018, the City enacted a ban on Styrofoam. In 2019, the Baltimore Clean Air Act was enacted to regulate the emissions from commercial solid waste incinerators, a local law with the potential to force a major Baltimore major polluter, the BRESKO incinerator, to close as early as this current year.

Also last year, the City Council approved Baltimore's 2019 Sustainability Plan which sets a 90% Zero Waste diversion goal, expands composting collections, and insists that the City's recycling program be reliably and readily available to all neighborhoods (in compliance with Baltimore's Equity Assessment law of 2018). Indeed, the Baltimore Office of Sustainability has already partnered with the Natural Resources Defense Council to establish Baltimore's Food Matters program with the goals of reducing food waste to 50% of its current level by 2030 and reducing residential food waste by 80% by 2040.

Most recently, the City enacted the Comprehensive Bag Reduction bill, which will ban most plastic bags in the City. The Office of Sustainability is diligently working to inform Baltimoreans of this new law, which goes into effect in 2021, and is creating partnerships to distribute re-usable grocery bags throughout the City.

In recognition of the culmination of these years of preparation and the urgency of the mission and initiatives outlined by the “Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste,” the Council, standing with its partners in this effort, calls upon all of Baltimore, the Mayor, the Board of Estimates, and all affected City agencies to formally acknowledge and move forward in implementing the Plan’s recommendations.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That The City Council hereby calls on the Mayor and affected agencies to adopt a Zero Waste goal to divert 90% of all materials discarded in the City from landfills, incinerators and the environment by 2040.

And be it further resolved, That the City Council calls upon the City’s elected and agency leaders, neighborhood residents, businesses, nonprofit organizations, schools, and youth organizations to actively join forces to achieve this goal and to champion Baltimore’s Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste as a guide and measure of our City’s progress in transforming the “waste of waste” into promising opportunities for “the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning, and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.” (*Zero Waste International Alliance (2018)*).

And be it further resolved, That the Plan calls upon the Mayor and Director of the Department of Public Works to continue to inform and involve the City Council, the Sustainability Commission, the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal, the Fair Development Roundtable, and other stakeholders as work progresses on specific Zero Waste programs and administrative policies.

And be it further resolved, That the City Council calls upon the Mayor and Public Works Director to work with the Plan’s stakeholders to review and undertake the following Plan priorities in achieving this 90% Zero Waste goal:

- a. Defend and enforce the Clean Air Act in Baltimore City, which holds polluting incinerators to higher standards than current and inadequate State and federal regulations.
- b. Terminate the City’s contract with BRESKO in 2021, thus allowing materials to be reclaimed using phasing-in Zero Waste infrastructure.
- c. Implement a Zero Waste "bridge strategy" including:
 - expanded collections, increased processing capacity - and transfer capacity (if needed), including transfers outside of Baltimore, for example, possibly with Baltimore County;
 - expanded recycling and composting programs, including free recycling and composting carts to all City households, recycling for all households, along with education and outreach materials on a consistent basis;
 - collection contracts with existing Baltimore-based organics collection providers to support these City-based enterprises; and
 - community scale composting sites within the City and transfer of remaining organics to recycling facilities outside Baltimore if needed.
- d. Create a “\$1 Vacant Lot Program” that would award vacant lots to non-profits and community organizations based on stewardship and development proposals.
- e. Paired with the preceding effort, establish an “End Illegal Dumping Fund” of \$1 million annually to

implement the maintenance of vacant lots, especially those currently targeted for illegal dumping, and empower residents to reclaim such parcels for productive uses such as affordable housing, gardens, farms, and play spaces. This fund would be utilized to prioritize reallocation of resources to frontline communities historically dumped on, disinvested in, and disproportionately impacted by destructive disposal activities such as incinerators, landfills, and habitual illegal dumping sites.

- f. Issue Requests for Proposals to attract mission-based or worker-owned recycling and composting operators capable of meeting Baltimore's need for expanded collections into recycling for all and curbside compost collections, including provisions for:
- contracts for lengthy terms to ensure consistency; and, local hiring, living wages, benefits, and career pathway requirements to promote local career opportunities; and
 - preference for local markets, recovery of quality materials; requiring that contractors report on the composition of material, the amount of residual, and the destination of sold material; and performance-based contracting incentives.

And be it further resolved, That the Council calls on the Mayor, the Board of Estimates, and all affected City Agencies to formally acknowledge and move forward in implementing the “Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste.”

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Comptroller, the acting Director of the Department of Public Works, the acting City Solicitor, the Director of the Office of Sustainability, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.